

Man who fled from Africa wrongly claimed £23k benefits

# JAIL FOR ASYLUM SEEKER IN FRAUD

Report by Richard Guttridge

**A FORMER asylum seeker who fraudulently claimed more than £23,000 after failing to notify the authorities he had moved in with his partner has been jailed.**

Tamba Gborie received tax credit payments over a three-year period that he was not entitled to.

His partner Mary Koroma – who received £14,000 more than she should have – was only spared jail so her three young children did not have to go into care.

Judge Michael Challinor said both were guilty of a 'cynical and deliberate fraud'.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard Gborie, aged 36, had fled from Sierra Leone to seek asylum in the UK. His request was granted in 2010 when he began claiming benefits.

Gborie and Koroma, aged 38, of Cypress Road, Delves, Walsall, failed to declare the fact they were living together as partners and continued to receive payments between 2010 and 2013 on the basis they were living alone. When interviewed by police both claimed they did not know they were breaking the law, the court heard.

## Dishonesty

Gborie, now of Coveley Grove, Winson Green, Birmingham, who pleaded guilty to two counts of failing to notify a change in circumstances, was jailed for nine months.

Judge Challinor said: "It seems to me a significant aggravating feature you were living together and would have been aware of each other's dishonesty."

"This was a cynical and deliberate fraud made worse by the fact you asked for protection from the UK and then repaid that indulgence by fleeing the taxpayer. Your actions have a significant impact on other seeking asylum who work hard and obey the rules. They are affected by you."

However, Koroma, who pleaded guilty to four counts of the same charge, was spared prison after the court heard she was the sole carer for her three children, all aged under six, who would likely have had to be placed into care.

Her 12-month jail sentence was suspended for 18 months. She must also complete 200 hours of unpaid work.

The judge said: "The consequences of that would be three young children who are entirely blameless being left without anyone to look after them and for their sake I spare you of immediate imprisonment."

## PLAYERS ARE ON TARGET TO BRING FESTIVE CHEER



Staff nurse Tina Worrall with, front, Adam Chambers, James Baxendale, Paul Downing, back, Amadou Bakayoko, Craig MacGillivray, Romaine Sawyers, Liam Kinsella, James O'Connor, Andy Taylor and Sam Mantom at the Manor Hospital



Community director for Saddlers Adam Davy and player Liam Kinsella shows youngster Jensen his toys



Saddlers centre back James O'Connor meets Keira Dyoss, aged five, from Reedswood

CHRISTMAS came early for children in hospital after they received a visit from Walsall FC players, who came bearing gifts and were happy to pose for photographs.

Skipper Adam Chambers, Craig MacGillivray, Andy Taylor and Sam Mantom were among the players visiting Walsall Manor Hospital.

There were smiles all round as the players made their way through the hospital corridors greeting patients and the public.

The players first visited the children's ward before going to the paediatric assessment unit and finishing at the outpatients' ward.

They then topped off their festive visit by singing a few verses of 'We wish you a Merry Christmas' along with staff, parents and patients who joined in.

Chambers said: "We have been doing this visit to the hospital for a few years now."

## Spirits

"It's great to be able to give back and brighten up the day for the little ones. It is never nice being in hospital at this time of year."

"It is never nice at any time of year, but especially at Christmas, so anything we can do to try and lift their spirits and brighten their day, we are more than happy to do."

Defender Andy Taylor added: "Coming up to Christmas time, hopefully we can bring a little bit of joy to the kids."

One patient on the Children's Ward was one-year-old Lily-Mae Hamilton. Lily-Mae, from Bloxwich, suffers with cerebral palsy and can't speak. However, she certainly expressed her delight when the team presented her with a pink stuffed elephant.

Mum Kelly said: "It was really nice to be visited by the team. They were talking to Lily and she was smiling and waving. She also loved having her photograph taken."

## DEATH

### Former Methodist minister dies, 73

A FORMER female minister of churches in Walsall has died, aged 73, after a lengthy battle with Alzheimer's Disease.

Rev Elaine Woolley had also served at Trinity Church in Hednesford along with Chads-moor Methodist Church and Florence Street Methodist in Hednesford.

She was taken into New Cross Hospital with chest pains on Sunday, December 13, and died peacefully the same day.

Rev Woolley

Rev Woolley was a trailblazer for women, being one of the country's first female Methodist ministers, and spent time alongside Mother Teresa at the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta.

The former midwife, who was also a Chaplain at RAF Stafford, and her husband John also lived in The Gambia in West Africa where they preached and worked extensively in the community.

Her cremation will be held at 2.15pm on Wednesday, January 6 at Bushbury Crematorium, Wolverhampton, with a thanksgiving service at Trinity Methodist Church, Hednesford, at 3.15pm. For details contact A J Sellman Funeral Directors on 01543 502322.

## FOOTBALL

### New era for Saddlers as O'Driscoll installed

WALSALL Football Club started a new era with the appointment of Sean O'Driscoll as the club's new manager. Born in Wolverhampton, O'Driscoll was immediately available as replacement for outgoing boss Dean Smith after he left as assistant manager of Liverpool in October.

He has also managed Bournemouth, Bristol City and England's under-19s side. O'Driscoll replaces Dean Smith who had been in charge at the Banks's Stadium for almost five years before leaving to join Championship side Brentford.

It is believed the former midfielder was recommended to club officials by Smith.

● Full report – Page 28



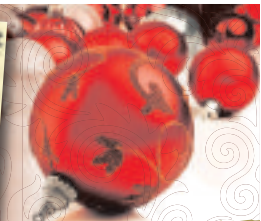
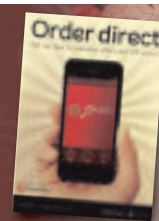
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# Dave gets Santa back to Bearwood



Dave Upson in his Santa garb

HE may not have been welcome at Birmingham's Bullring, but Santa brought festive cheer to a party shop in the Black Country.

David Upson, aged 69 from Oldbury, is known in Bearwood as Santa Dave. Recently, he was turned away from the Bullring by security guards after being told he was not allowed to enter in his costume 'as it was private property'.

Mr Upson has posted his experience on Facebook, which has now been shared by friends and supporters of Santa Dave more than 5,000 times.

But Mr Upson did not let it get him out of the festive spirit where he visited the shop Mad as a Hatter in the days up to Christmas. Mr Upson, a retired land surveyor, has been dressing up as Santa for the last 16 years.

He said: "I thoroughly enjoy playing Santa and love the Mad as a Hatter shop - I've been involved with them for as long as they've been opened. I love talking to the kids and making this time of year extra special for them.

"The shop is a lovely, friendly and quirky place and I see it as a home from

home. It's a great place to bring Santa season to Bearwood and I'm sure the kids are going to be very excited."

Owner of Mad as a Hatter Hayley Albright was equally as excited to get the Christmas days underway. She said: "Dave spends a lot of time with us in the shop and has an incredibly good heart. He does so much for charity without charging anything.

"We always welcome him with open arms here. We're hoping around 100 to 150 parents and children to each day and I'm as equally excited as them."

# Service chief hits out at staffing crisis fears

**THE boss of West Midlands Ambulance Service claims the region has the highest ratio of paramedics on the front line in the UK - despite a union insisting the country is facing a major staffing crisis.**

Chief executive Anthony Marsh's comments come after workers union GMB claimed unfilled vacancies and staff shortages is meaning existing staff have to shoulder more responsibility and crews responding to 999 calls are staffed inadequately.

Rehana Azam, GMB acting national secretary, said: "The vacancy rate across the ambulance service is reaching dangerous levels.

"This, combined with staff shortages, means existing staff have to shoulder more responsibility and crews responding to 999 calls are staffed inadequately. The service needs proper investment and full recognition of skills if we are to retain staff."

But Mr Marsh, said: "As a trust we have the highest ratio of paramedics on the front line of any UK ambulance service. We are fully committed to achieving our ambition of having a paramedic on every emergency ambulance and response car which will be the only ambulance service in the country to achieve this objective.

### Recruit

"As a consequence of our ongoing investment in recruitment and training we are fully staffed; we have no paramedic vacancies and to continue to actively recruit student and graduate paramedics to our highly successful paramedic training programme.

"This is a two year 'hands on' training contract that ensures we are fully prepared for when existing staff do leave the service; for example when they reach retirement age.

"In collaboration with commissioners, we are continuing to offer additional training programmes to existing paramedics to enhance their existing medical skills.

Our advanced paramedics can treat even more people at home for their medical issue with such treatments including suturing minor wounds and also carrying out sample tests to check for water infections."

## Ladies make the weight for dates



Women from the Cambridge Weight Plan with the calendar, from left, Kay Bowen, Louise Peck and Sarah Westwood

THEY collectively lost more than 20 stone between them - now they are baring all to raise money for a life-saving piece of kit.

The women, who lost the pounds taking on the Cambridge Weight Plan, stripped off for a naked calendar which is now on sale.

Louise Peck, Kay Bowen, Nicky Evans, Karen Freeman, Tanya Mercer, Brigitte Rafferty, Kerry Salmon, Nicky Colyer, Tiffany Johnson and organiser Sarah Westwood hope to raise £2,000 for a new

automated external defibrillator. The girls are unsure where they will place the new defibrillator, but have said it will be local.

Ms Bowen, from Sedgley, said: "This calendar has been created by a team of Cambridge consultants and clients based in the West Midlands with photographs of successful slimmers who have collectively lost over 20 stone using the CWP programme."

Wolverhampton-based Dark Lens Photographic Services pro-

vided the photo shoot free of charge while ALK Print provided the photographs. This is not the first time Cambridge Weight Plan have raised money for charity. In January earlier this year the girls raised over £100 for Wolverhampton's cardiac unit to coincide with National Obesity Awareness Week.

On their roadshow they also visited, Dudley, Sedgley, Walsall and Stafford. Anyone interested in buying a calendar can call Cambridge Weight Plan on 01536 403344.

# Parents are found guilty over child abuse claim

A MOTHER and father have been found guilty of causing or allowing serious harm to their three-year-old boy, who had a fractured skull, arm and leg and extensive bruising.

The jury took one hour and 37 minutes to find the pair, who can not be identified, guilty at Wolverhampton Crown Court after a six-day trial. The former partners are in their 20s and from Walsall.

The boy's father was found guilty of three counts of causing or allowing serious harm to come to a child. He had earlier pleaded guilty to one charge of cruelty to a person under the age of 15.

The child's mother was found guilty of one count of causing or allowing serious harm to a child, having earlier pleaded guilty to two counts. She was also previously pleaded guilty to one count of cruelty to a person under the age of 15.

Judge James Burbidge told the pair: "It is just and proper that I wait to determine sentence in your case for two reasons. Firstly so I can obtain reports on you both from the probation officer.

"And secondly so I can find out the up-to-date position with regard to the children. You might not necessarily leave the court through the front door on January 21."

The boy and the couple's other two children are together at a safe foster home. During the trial, the court heard how the child's father had told his partner to slap her son 'until it works', before the boy suffered fractured skull and severe bruising.

## Council debt hits record at £600m

WOLVERHAMPTON Council's debt mountain hit a record high of £600 million over the last year, a new report has revealed. Borrowing at the cash-strapped authority has risen by almost £100m in the last two years, with interest repayments on the general fund alone now standing at more than £246,000 a week.

Auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers outlined 'a number of concerns' over the authority's financial position in future years with further Government cuts. The council's annual treasury management report shows borrowing stood at £600m in January this year. It dropped to £585.8m by the end of September.

Financial chief Councillor Andrew Johnson said it was business as usual and that the debt was manageable.

## Salon anniversary aids church fund

A WOLVERHAMPTON salon has celebrated its fifth anniversary, and raised hundreds of pounds for a church in the process.

Staff from Salon 27, Penn, held a festive party at St Bartholomew's Church. The event raised £310.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

# 6,000 better links set up

MORE than 6,000 businesses and households in the Black Country are now able to access high-speed fibre broadband as part of a rolling programme. The Black Country Broadband Project said parts of Dudley, Walsall, Wednesbury, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton are among the latest areas to benefit.

They include the St Matthew's area of Walsall, East Park, south Darlaston, Friar Park, Charlemont with Grove Vale, Halesowen North, Hateley Heath, Heath Town, Blackheath, Langley, Rowley, Bristnall, St Paul's, Tividale and parts of Oldbury.

The scheme's lead partners are Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and BT.

As part of the roll-out, engineers have so far installed more than 90 fibre broadband road-side cabinets, which are needed to enable local premises to connect to the new network. Work has already started on the second phase of the roll-out, which will extend the reach of the technology to parts of Brierley Hill, Dudley, James Bridge, Streetly, Tipton and Willenhall from January 2016 onwards.

## Envelope worry led to closure

POLICE were called to a Stourbridge bank after concerns were raised about a 'suspicious envelope'.

Officers were called to Nationwide in High Street at around 11.40am on Tuesday and the branch was closed.

As well as blocking access, officers were also seen interviewing members of the public inside.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "It was found that the item didn't pose a threat and has since been removed from the scene for further analysis. We are still investigating the incident."

## Hospice service gets £1,000 boost

MARY Stevens Hospice is celebrating after receiving £1,000 from Vodafone UK. They collected the Vodafone Community Connection Award last week after staff in the Stourbridge store chose the hospice to benefit.

Charlotte Schofield, who entered the charity for the award, said: "We will use this money to fund the refurbishment of our Day Services Unit. We are currently trying to raise money so we are able to support 25 patients each day rather than 17."

## Christingle at church

A CHRISTINGLE service takes place at a Dudley church on Christmas Eve to raise money for a children's charity. The family favourite service is being held in aid of The Children's Society at St Peter's Church in Kent Street, Upper Gornal, and starts at 6pm on December 24.

# Offender jailed for grooming teenager

A SEX offender from Willenhall has been jailed for more than three years after grooming a 13-year-old girl.

On four separate occasions 21-year-old Robert Turner, from Bloxwich Road South, took the schoolgirl into some woods and had sex with her.

Stafford Crown Court heard the pair had exchanged messages via their Blackberry phones but it was the girl who had contacted Turner first. Turner admitted four charges of sexual activity with a child.

As well as being jailed for 40 months last Wednesday, Turner was also ordered to register as a sex offender for life and has also been banned from working with children for life.

Judge Jonathan Gosling said Turner posed 'a significant risk to young girls'. He told the defendant: "This girl was very young, her youth and vulnerability were obvious to you. You are an intelligent man, the law is there to protect girls like this against themselves."

"You knew exactly what you were up to and you took full advantage. I have seen the messages, they demonstrate your manipulation of her. You have significantly upset her development. You have robbed her of the freedom a young teenager should enjoy."

Miss Lynette McClement, defending, said: "This was a young lady who contacted him on Blackberry messaging. He told me she was the first girl who had shown him any affection. This is an extremely inexperienced and socially inept young man."

# Expanded casino good bet for jobs

A RECRUITMENT drive has been launched to find 100 people to work at a £4 million casino in Wolverhampton.

Under plans, The Rubicon Casino in Temple Street will expand into the empty neighbouring building, formerly The Dorchester/Beach nightclub, to create Casino 36. It is due to open next year.

Unemployed people are being targeted over the coming months for roles at the casino, with the council and Job Centre Plus helping to recruit croupiers, hospitality staff, bar staff, waiting staff and cleaners.

An initial 15 trainee croupiers have recently been taken on and are currently undergoing training with The National Gaming Academy.

# Salon anniversary aids church fund

A WOLVERHAMPTON salon has celebrated its fifth anniversary, and raised hundreds of pounds for a church in the process. Staff from Salon 27, Penn held a festive party at St Bartholomew's Church.

# Number of people in work on rise

THE Government was given a pre-Christmas boost on the jobs front after new figures showed near-record numbers of people in work in the West Midlands as unemployment fell by almost a fifth over the last year.

At the same time the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits has continued to fall across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Nationwide unemployment is now at a seven-year low, down by 110,000 in the quarter to October to 1.7 million. At the same time, across the UK, more than 31 million people are in work, the highest since comparable records began in 1971.

In the West Midlands unemployment fell by 3,000 to 153,000 and has dropped by more than 18 per

cent in the last 12 months. Employment in the region rose 22,000 to 2,617,000 over the last quarter. Employment Minister Priti Patel said: "The number of people in work in the West Midlands is almost at a record high."

Across the country the claimant count - those on jobseeker's allowance and the out of work element of Universal Credit - increased by 3,900 last month to 796,200, the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed.

In Wolverhampton the claimant count fell by 124 to 5,885, while in Walsall it was down by 40 to 4,230 and in Sandwell it fell 105 to 6,335. But the number of people claiming benefits in Dudley increased, by 93, to 5,275.

Cathy Taylor, from Jobcentre Plus in the Black Country, said: "There's no obvious reason for the rise in Dudley. It is certainly against the trend. Across the area we have seen the number of young people claiming down by 26 per cent, while overall claimant figures are down 21 per cent."

After the recent Christmas recruitment surge by shops and delivery companies, Mrs Taylor said her team was now preparing to deal with the first workers to be laid off from Goodyear, which is closing over the next two years.

"We have already been working with people who lost their jobs at Caparo. Some have gone back into manufacturing but others are looking at jobs in other fields."

# M'way roadworks finally complete, six months on

OVERRUNNING motorway roadworks which caused a year of chaos on surrounding roads have finally been completed - six months later than expected.

Repair work on the link road off the M6 at Wednesbury on to the M5 in West Bromwich finished last Thursday morning.

It brings to an end 12 months of misery for motorists across the region, caused by sealed off lanes and the closure of the M6 Junction 9 slip road.

The southbound carriageway has returned to full-lane capacity and the slip road reopened.

But bosses have warned there could be up to six overnight closures in the new year on the same stretch in order to complete 'snagging works'.

Highways England project manager Jess Kenny said: "We would like to thank motorists for their patience throughout the year in what has been a long and challenging maintenance programme."

## Minimal

"It was vital that we did this work and we are pleased to finally have the roadworks removed. In the new year we will need to carry out final pieces of work which will be done overnight and will have minimal impact on motorists."

The work, which was carried out to replace damaged waterproofing along the stretch of motorway, was originally due to be finished in June.

"But it met a series of delays after it emerged that damage underneath the carriageway was far worse than bosses had expected."

The job was extended until November, but another four-week delay followed after extensive steel corrosion and concrete damage was found.

As part of the work, the Junction 9 slip road at Wednesbury was blocked off.

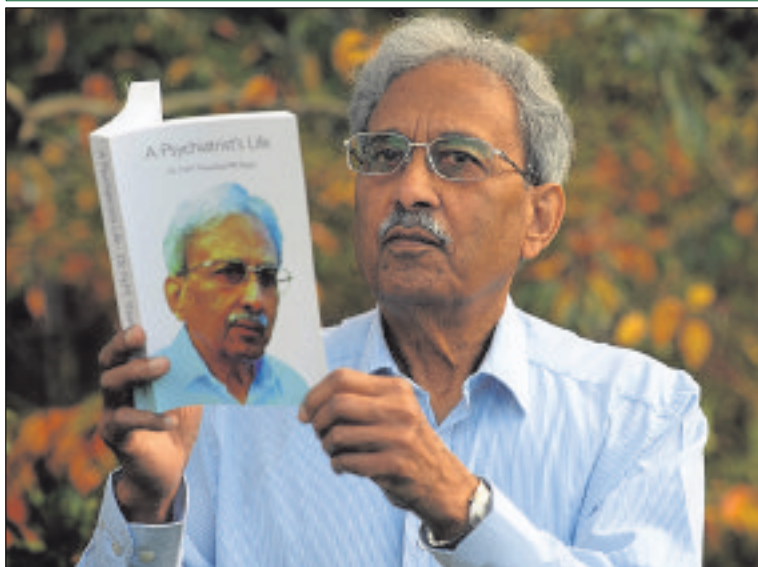
This meant drivers were forced to travel miles out of their way to access the M6 from Walsall town centre.

In August frustrated residents protested at the slip road over fears that its closure had caused Walsall to become a gridlocked town.

Walsall North MP David Winnick said people had suffered 'terribly' across Walsall as a result of the roadworks.

"I know there will be a lot of relief and satisfaction among the many who have been affected by this," he added.

## New chapter for psychiatrist



Dr N M Yousufzai with his book A Psychiatrist's life which tells the story of his career, is seen at his home

A PSYCHIATRIST who was born in India but went on work in the Black Country for decades has written his life story. Dr Noor Yousufzai, a retired consultant psychiatrist and Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, has written A Psychiatrist's Life.

It details Dr Yousufzai's journey from a poor but proud family in the small town of Najibabad, India, through to his success in the UK as a clinical tutor, marriage guidance councillor and medical director for the Walsall Mental Health Trust.

The 79 year old, who lives in Sutton Road, Walsall, said: "I am very proud of my book, it was difficult to write but I am glad I persevered and got to the end. At times, I was revisiting sections of my past that I knew would upset me but I wanted my story to be the complete truth, not something selective. I stopped writing

for months at a time because I agonised over what my friends and family would think of me after they read this."

As well as being a detailed story of Dr Yousufzai's life, the book also acts as an insight into the world of psychology and stigma that can surround it.

A Psychiatrist's Life is available online from www.youcaxton.co.uk/yousufzai/ or from amazon.co.uk

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## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



YOU really must excuse the older generation for not joining the kids in punching the air in celebration as Tim Peake begins his tour of duty on the International Space Station. One newspaper's science writer, who looks about 12, trills that this is "a giant leap in British space exploration." Let's keep it in perspective, eh? Major Tim is 250 miles high. In 1969 we watched man land on the moon which is 250,000 miles away. In 1971 and 1972 astronauts used the Lunar Roving Vehicle. That's right, kids. More than 40 years ago, blokes were driving a car on the moon. Back then we assumed that by 2015 we'd have colonies on Mars, but the money ran out. So while a 250-mile hop into orbit is as courageous and inspiring as ever, let's not fool ourselves. The giant leap into space is still on the drawing board.

I AM always wary of complaining about meals, thanks to the TV series, Friends. You may recall Rachel (Jennifer Aniston) describing how one moaning customer got a little something extra in his meal. She called it a "sneeze muffin." And in response to the latest furore, one blogger reported: "I paid my way through college working as a kitchen hand in a well known restaurant. I know what happens to the food of unreasonable customers before it gets served to them. I wouldn't complain and then eat the replacement dish if I were you." You have been warned.

WHAT is it with ghosts in TV dramas these days? In River (BBC1), the detective was haunted by his dead colleague. In The Bridge (BBC4) a cop is haunted by his missing, presumed dead, wife and kids. And then Luther (BBC1) returned this week and blow me if our hero (Idris Elba) isn't chatting with the shade of his murdered buddy Justin (Warren Brown). Shakespeare would have loved it but how odd to see so many ghosts in the 21st century.

THE British Veterinary Association warns that the fad for feeding dogs and cats on vegetarian food could damage their health. That may well apply to dogs who tend to wolf down anything you put in front of them. But cats are fussy. Once denied its red meat, your moggie may turn into something quite unexpected – a pedestrian. If you won't feed Tiddles what she wants, there is always some sucker down the road who will. Next thing you know, Tiddles is living three streets away, under the new name of Fluffy and has entirely forgotten you, and your nut puree.

THE latest reports suggest that most owners who try to turn pets into vegetarians do so because they have moral objections to meat. So why not buy a guinea pig?

**Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star**

# Police 'fail to identify young at-risk'

WEST Midlands Police is failing to protect children from abuse and checks on sex offenders are not being carried out, a damning report says. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has demanded further action after inspectors found: Officers failing to recognise children at risk of exploitation despite clear warning signs; lack of training resulting in 'poor investigations'; 250 sex of-

fender checks not carried out. Also listed: Year-long delays for analysis of computers and other electronic devices in a huge backlog; children missing more than 10 times without any action to protect them and youths unnecessarily kept overnight in cells. Seventeen out of 21 cases of child sex exploitation looked at by inspectors were deemed to be 'inade-

quate' or 'required improvement'. The revelations led to West Midlands MEP Bill Etheridge to ask: "What they hell is going on?" But West Midlands Police says it is already taking action to address concerns with how it handles cases of child sexual abuse. Assistant Chief Constable Carl Foulkes, who heads the force's public protection units, said senior officers were also acting

on two other reports produced by inspectors relating to domestic violence and vulnerable victims. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary said the force was improving how it dealt with protecting children but raised concerns and issued a list of recommendations for senior officers to address. ACC Foulkes said: "I welcome this scrutiny."

# More needs to be done to protect our children

Report by Rob Gollledge

**MORE needs to be done to ensure children in the West Midlands are protected from sexual abuse, a police inspector has said**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said West Midlands Police has improved how it deals with vulnerable children, but has warned that some youngsters are still at risk.

She said the force had 'partially achieved' addressing concerns previously raised by inspectors last year and praised bosses. She also highlighted good examples of investigations.

But her report found that not all officers had the right training, sex offenders were not being checked as regularly as they should, and long delays were caused in analysing electronic devices and with the Crown Prosecution Service.

She said: "It is clear from this follow up inspection West Midlands Police has made progress in particular areas since our initial inspection. We were encouraged to find a clear commitment to improving child protection services, which is reflected in the significant increase in officers and staff in public protection units.

"We also found good examples of investigations by the force, particularly when children were identified as being at further risk of immediate harm.

### Inconsistent

"Despite these encouraging signs, there is still work the force needs to do to improve as child sexual exploitation is still dealt with inconsistently across the force area, although the situation is getting better.

"The response to children who regularly go missing from home also requires further improvement, although inspectors were pleased to see that in most cases officers and staff understood the link between children who regularly go missing and sexual exploitation.

"We have asked West Midlands Police to provide us with an updated action plan, to see how it will incorporate the findings in our report into the work it is already doing.

"Depending on its response, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary may revisit the force again."

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: "We recognise the recommendations in this report and will continue to work with our partners to deliver on these. Protecting children is an absolute priority of mine and West Midlands Police.

"I have made it a priority to set up multi-agency



Lonely and vulnerable – child sexual abuse victim

(posed by a model)

safeguarding hubs in each local authority. Three have been set-up so far and plans are in place for the rest of the force area.

"West Midlands Police is now publishing a summary of data on child sexual exploitation to bring this issue out into the open.

"This is a serious report with important recommendations that I will hold the police to account to deliver."

Responding to the report, Wolverhampton South East MP Pat McFadden said: "After everything that has been exposed about child sexual abuse in recent years it is very important that the police and all the agencies involved learn from what has gone wrong in the past.

"I think efforts are being made and those should be acknowledged, but where the report makes criticisms or identifies gaps it is essential

there is an open-minded and full response. Protection of children is a top priority and the cases reported in recent times show that many of the children subjected to abuse have been failed by the state as well as abused by others."

Walsall North MP David Winnick, a senior member of the Home Affairs select committee, added: "The good news undoubtedly is the recognition that there has been improvement in this important aspect of policing.

"However, concerns have been raised and it is essential the police act on this and the appropriate remedies are taken as soon as possible.

And Dudley South MP Mike Wood said: "While I'm pleased Her Majesty's inspectors found some improvements, when it comes to protecting vulnerable children from some of the most evil crimes, nothing but the best can be good enough."

# New chief at hospice to join in the spring

A WOLVERHAMPTON-based charity has announced the appointment of a new chief executive.

Claire Marshall, currently commercial director and deputy chief executive of Birmingham St Mary's Hospice, will take up her post at Compton Hospice in March.

She will join Compton Hospice following a 21-year career in the voluntary sector which has included roles at Sue Ryder Care, Cancer Research UK and Air Ambulance.

### Thrilled

Mrs Marshall said: "I am thrilled to have been offered the opportunity to lead Compton Hospice, a charity which has a wide range of services and a wonderful reputation for delivering exceptional care in the local community.

"Having started my professional career in the hospice movement over 20 years ago, and also having family experience of the outstanding care provided by hospices, I am delighted to be able to come full circle and join the Compton team.

"I am passionate about hospice care and am very much looking forward to working with Compton's committed staff and volunteers in continuing to deliver excellent palliative and end of life care to patients and families who need them."

Mrs Marshall succeeds Ron Middleton who will retire in March after 18 years as chief executive at Compton hospice.

# Police crackdown on rowdy youths

POLICE are cracking down on youngsters causing anti-social behaviour in part of Wolverhampton.

Officers have targeted Hampton Road and the Rakegate estate in Oxley.

The action comes after residents have reported that youths have been congregating in a large group, being noisy and causing damage across the estate. The youths have also reportedly caused issues for businesses, including the shops on Hampton Road and One Stop on Oxley Moor Road.

The Oxley neighbourhood policing team has now been working the Wolverhampton anti-social behaviour team to identify those responsible, with anti-social behaviour first stage warning letters given to nine identified youths.

# Cast seeks Fame in theatre production

WOLVERHAMPTON Musical Comedy Company present Fame the Musical at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from March 15-19 next year.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Fears on young turning to crime

COURT closures and cuts to youth services could see more young people turn to crime, a councillor says.

A potential 14 criminal courts in the region could be axed to save money, while libraries and children's centres across Walsall are facing the axe.

Darlaston North Councillor Doug James said: "In Darlaston and Moxley many parents are worried about protecting their young people from the threat of legal highs, drugs, alcohol abuse and the influence of criminal gangs. With huge reductions in local youth services, threats to local policing and even local court closures, Government Services are struggling. "Young people will make the right decisions to avoid crime but, too often the temptation of a quick profit can outweigh their best intentions."

Sports Direct attacked by MP

WALSALL MP David Winnick has described 'totally unacceptable' working conditions at Sports Direct as being reminiscent of 'the early years of the last century', following a newspaper investigation. His comments follow a probe over conditions at the firm's main warehouse.

Pressing skills minister Nick Boles over the issue in Parliament, Mr Winnick said: "In some instances, women are apparently not willing to stay away from work, even if their child is sick for a day, simply because they may lose their job."

In response Mr Boles said that the Government would be enforcing workers' protections 'robustly'.

Elderly woman is given oxygen

FIREFIGHTERS rescued an elderly woman after finding her unconscious on the floor of her smoke-filled home.

Crews were called to the property in Cedar Avenue, Brownhills, at 11.42am last Tuesday after the alarm was raised. They discovered the pensioner slumped on the kitchen floor after falling, suffering from the effects of smoke.

She was carried out by firefighters and given oxygen therapy before being taken to Walsall Manor Hospital for further treatment. It is believed the fire was caused by a hotwater bottle being left on the electric hob.

Royal date for St John volunteer

A WOLVERHAMPTON teenager received a royal invitation as she was recognised for her work with St John Ambulance.

Megan Cullen, aged 18, from Penn was named as one of the service's top young volunteers in the West Midlands and was invited to the charity's Young Achievers' Reception in London where she met HRH The Princess Royal. Megan was among 100 young people invited to the reception at Buckingham Palace.

Thousands more days locked up for inmates

PRISONERS in Wolverhampton and Staffordshire have incurred thousands of extra days behind bars for bad behaviour while serving their sentences.

A report released by the Howard League of Penal Reform revealed that lags at the G4S ran HMP Oakwood in Featherstone, for Category C male offenders, had clocked up the most in the West Midlands with 4,934 in 2014 - an average of 3.1 days per prisoner.

While inmates at Brinsford Young Offenders Institution racked up 3,288 days - around 7.1 per offender. An extra 2,491 days were handed out at nearby Featherstone for Category C males - 3.6 each on average.

Officials at Swinfen Hall Young Offenders Institute in Lichfield, which houses young men serving sentences from four years to life, dealt out lots of extra punishment despite only having around 585 inmates.

Last year they clocked up 3,216 - more than five each on average.

By comparison the Category C males institute at Stafford, where disgraced former entertainer Rolf Harris is currently serving time for indecent assault on children, were relatively well-behaved notching up 1,002 extra days between 711 inmates - 1.4 each.

The Howard League of Penal Reform has urged the Ministry of Justice to reign its administration of further time behind bars arguing it is a costly process creating a vicious cycle. The charity has also pointed to overcrowding in prisons and reductions in staff as exacerbating the problem.

Store urged to boost security

A WALSALL supermarket will have to review its security policy in light of an attempted early morning raid, according to a councillor.

Four armed robbery suspects were arrested after the raid on Asda in Darlaston by a gang who threatened staff with a wrench and crowbar.

Police officers were nearby at the time. Darlaston Councillor Doug James said: "My concern is our local staff."

"I am not aware that anyone was hurt but every support must be provided to shop workers."

"Asda will have to review its security and I am sure that the police will provide professional assistance."

"We must always do our best to keep staff safe at all times."

Church hosting an organ recital

MUSIC fans can see in the new year with an organ recital, taking place at a Wordsley church on Sunday, January 3. Paul Carr will be performing at Holy Trinity Parish Church on High Street at 3pm and admission is free.

MEP calls for regional airports' boost

REGIONAL airports such as Birmingham should be expanded instead of creating a third runway at Heathrow, according to a West Midlands MEP.

Jill Seymour, who is also UKIP's transport spokeswoman, said the latest delayed decision over an additional runway at Heathrow was an opportunity to look at carrying out work at other airports, including Birmingham.

It follows calls from Dudley North MP Ian Austin on the Government to invest in expansion of Birmingham Airport.

"Indecision and uncertainty is the

enemy of business, and the Government's dithering could cause serious damage to the UK's reputation, and economy," Ms Seymour said.

"Not only that, but it is causing continued heartache for the many people, who fear they may lose their homes if this third runway at Heathrow goes ahead. These people deserve an answer, one way or the other, so they can move on with their lives, and plan for their future. It is grossly unfair to leave them in limbo in this way."

Mrs Seymour said regional airports such as Birmingham should be prioritised for growth.

She said: "I'm opposed to the idea of building a third runway at Heathrow. We should be expanding capacity at all of our regional airports across the UK instead."

"But whatever people's views may be about the expansion of Heathrow, it's vital now that the Government gets off the fence, and reaches a definitive conclusion."

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin says the Government needs to "undertake more work on environmental impacts, including air quality, noise and carbon" before de-

£120,000 fine for worst waiting times at Manor

WALSALL Manor Hospital will be hit with a fine of almost £120,000 after its worst-ever performance for A&E waiting times.

The hospital will have to pay around £119,000 after just 81 per cent of patients were seen within the four-hour mark last month.

It follows various fines throughout the year for failing to hit waiting time targets. The latest figure, a two per cent drop from October, represents the hospital's worst performance since the measures were introduced in 2004.

Originally, hospitals were expected to see 98 per cent of patients within the four-hour mark, however, this was dropped to 95 per cent in 2010. The Manor Hospital has already racked up £475,000 in fines after missing targets in April, June, July, August, September and October.

The hospital has been battling against rising admissions, with growing numbers of patients coming across from Staffordshire, since last winter when services were stripped from County Hospital in Stafford.

Plummeted

It had hit its target in May and figures were improving in June and July, however they have now plummeted. A report into the failed targets states that the highest number of breaches in November were due to unavailable beds in the Division of Medicine. The average number of breaches per day came to 63, compared to 53 in October. Admissions during November were 64 per day, which is an increase compared to 63 per day in October. Discharges increased with a daily average of 198 in November compared to 195 in October.

In response to the failures, work has been carried out to review the roles and responsibilities of nurse co-ordinator and ambulance hand-over nurse at the Manor, with an additional nursing role set to be introduced in January to help identify inappropriate referrals to A&E.

Richard Cattell, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust Chief Operating Officer, said: "With winter pressures on the horizon, and the difficulties we have faced in meeting the four hour targets, we have to put measures in place to try and avoid long delays in the department at its busiest times which are frustrating for both patients and staff. We have changed the way we work so that borough patients are monitored and managed in the most appropriate place."

Adam lights up youngsters' Yuletide



Adam Parker from Lucknow Road, Willenhall seen with the toys he donated to Birmingham Children's

A SALESMAN from Willenhall has donated nearly £750 worth of toys to Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Adam Parker, aged 35, wanted to give something back this Christmas, so through fundraising and the help of his business suppliers, he held a charity night at his e-cigarette shop in Lucknow Road. Raising £745 worth of toys, which included a PS3 and Wii, he dropped the presents off to the

hospice, much to the delight of the children.

Father-of-two Adam said: "I've been fundraising for quite a while now and it's something I've always wanted to do. A lot of money has been raised in the past."

"Last month we raised over £400 for breast cancer after my friend's mom got diagnosed and we've raised over £1,000 before for Birmingham Children's Hospital. This time thought instead

of just raising money I wanted to give the kids something, especially for Christmas to let them know they're in our thoughts. I'm a dad so I know how important Christmas is for kids. It really is nice to be able to provide other children with things they might not thought they'd ever have."

He now plans to host a charity night in January which will raise money for diabetes, as his wife Lisa, aged 31, is a type 2 diabetic.

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IN MY VIEW  
with Mark Andrews



# Tesco is washing its hands of bag fees

A COUPLE of weeks ago I got on a train from Wolverhampton to Birmingham. It was filthy, passengers were packed like sardines into the drab, cramped carriages. Somebody had drawn a phallic symbol in the thick coating of dirt on the windows.

And the operator responsible for this service? It was one of the many services run by Deutschebahn, the German state-owned rail operator. They run quite a lot of trains around the West Midlands these days. Some of them very badly.

Bear that in mind next time somebody tells you that nationalisation is the solution for all the ills on our railways.

ACCORDING to a recent report, encouraging people to wash their hands for 30 seconds at a time could prevent up to 25,000 deaths a year.

Apparently the average Joe's hands are a haven for filth, bacteria and faeces. The study, which has prompted Government and medical bosses to launch a national hand washing campaign, reports that three in 10 commuters have poo on their hands as they go about their daily, ahem, business. Now remind me. Why did I never join the Freemasons?

GREAT news for supporters of the carrier bag charges. According to Tesco, use of plastic carriers has dropped by 78 per cent since the new rules came in.

The company says it has exceeded all expectations, with many people asking for a "bag-free delivery" when they order their shopping online. There have also been one or two rumblings about "changing people's attitudes". Of course there have. The great and the good are never happier than when they are changing people's attitudes.

And you know what? That's exactly what I was thinking when I was stumbling around town with my arms full of shopping, stooping every few yards to pick up the pork scratchings, sweets, bath products and tulip bulbs that I was carrying back to the car.

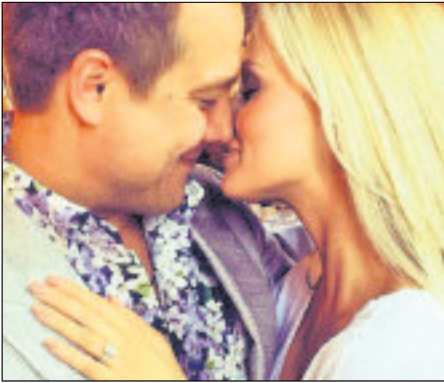
Still, on balance, I still think this is marginally preferable to the alternative, which seems to be walking around with your pockets stuffed with 'bags for life' and looking like Roy Cropper.

One thing did strike me though: doesn't it make life much easier for shoplifters now people are wandering into stores carrying goods they have bought elsewhere? And more to the point, doesn't it make life incredibly hard for shop assistants who, on top of their normal duties, now have to decide whether the customer's arms were really that full of shopping when they came through the door?

Did anybody give any consideration to that problem when deciding whether to introduce the new law? Thought not. Still, as long as it changes people's attitudes, that's the main thing.



Angus Mitchell, one-time playboy and a skilled hairdresser



Perfect couple? - how they were portrayed in the public eye



Blonde beauty - Sian is now barred from leaving California

# The model, billionaire and the custody fight

**ROB GOLLEDGE** looks at one Staffordshire family's fight for custody which could be straight out of a US soap opera

**IT WAS** the fairytale marriage of a girl from a Staffordshire village and a Hollywood tycoon.

But now model Sian Mitchell and her husband Angus, the heir to the one billion dollar Paul Mitchell beauty empire, are in a bitter legal battle over their divorce and the custody of their son.

Sian, from Great Wyrley married Mr Mitchell last year and gave birth to Dylan seven months ago.

But just 19 days later divorce proceedings were taken against Mrs Mitchell. She has been banned from leaving California with her baby by the US courts meaning she is trapped in the West Coast state and her family back home are yet to meet the new arrival.

The case has been raised for the first time by South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson. He has delivered a petition of 154 family and friends of Mrs Mitchell calling on the British Government to do all it can to assist her.

**Commons**

Mr Williamson told the House of Commons: "My constituent Sian Mitchell moved to the United States last year, following her engagement and marriage to an American citizen. Sadly, shortly after the birth of her son earlier this year, her marriage fell apart.

"Her multi-millionaire husband, Mr Angus Mitchell, has taken out court orders preventing Sian from taking her child out of the State of California until proceedings have been resolved, making it as difficult as possible for her to bring up her son in the way she wishes.

"Sian is away from her family and relies on their emotional support during this extremely difficult time. She is desperate to return home to the United Kingdom with her child to allow her family to have the chance to meet this little boy for the first time."



**All smiles together, but now there is a bitter battle, with millions of dollars at stake**

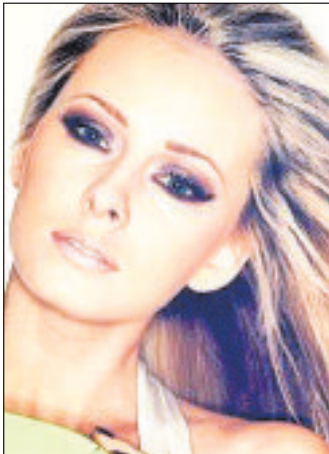
Mrs Mitchell grew up in Great Wyrley where she was known as Sian Morgan.

She went to St Dominic's High School for Girls, in Brewood, and was a member of the girl band ICandy which made it through to the boot camp of X-Factor in 2010.

She was also named Miss Coventry in the same year. She is now in her mid-20s. Mr Mitchell, 45, was born into the legacy of late legendary hairstylist Paul Mitchell. He was educated by Vidal Sassoon stylists and started to craft his own signature style.

He currently travels the world for hair events on behalf of Paul Mitchell. He lives in Los Angeles.

It is believed he met Mrs Mitchell while she was modelling in the States. The Paul Mitchell luxury hair brand is reportedly worth more than 1 billion dollars per year. Paul Mitchell was born in Carnwath, Scotland, in 1936, but



**Sian met Angus while modelling in the US**

"The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Government to make representations to the US Government and the State of California to press the issue and get a resolution to the problem at the earliest possible stage."

Mr Williamson told the Express & Star: "This is an incredibly sad case and I have asked the Government to do all it can in offering consular advice to Mrs Mitchell and her family. Her family in Great Wyrley are desperate to meet the baby for the first time and concerned for Mrs Mitchell who is after all, a young woman caught up in legal proceedings in a foreign country."

Her family in Great Wyrley are said to be 'desperate' to meet baby Dylan for the first time. Mr Mitchell and Mrs Mitchell were unavailable for comment.

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# Prayer at cinema is a good time for exit to get popcorn

SO, the Equality & Human Rights Commission (or at least its CEO anyway) has maintained that 'No-one has the right not to be offended' – and with that, I agree one hundred per cent.

However, should the cinemas be coerced by them into showing the 'Lord's Prayer' recital – promoting a new praying website – before the new Star Wars movie then they should know that I, for one, am not going to pay good money to be offended.

These street-corner preachers seem determined to stop me from just walking

## Rail project we can well do without

CAMPAIGNERS should go ahead to force a re-think on the HS2 rail project. This proposed HS2 project is the most absurd political folly of this century so far.

The prospect of wasting billions of pounds of taxpayers' money to replace a good rail system we already have trimmed to our local needs.

The initial proposed costs estimate £42bn, rising, plus £2.25bn at Euston Station plus would-be massive maintenance and running costs. It would not function without massive subsidies of taxpayers' money.

This money would be better spent invested on British engineering, creating jobs and exporting products worldwide. It is sad to think that the young today and possibly their children would be saddled with taxes to pay for a project that we can well do without.

No estimates have been given for the cost to industry and the public for the disruption the construction will cost, especially the loss to industry.

H DAVIES  
Walsall

past and to make me pay for the privilege of being harassed. I shall claim my seat and then as soon as the advertisement reel starts to roll, I shall feel the need to 'pay one last visit' and pick-up some popcorn.

I will be making sure that I don't get back a moment too soon.

I just hope that when I get back, some young extremist won't have been offended to the point of making a less-ignorable statement.

K MELLER  
Wolverhampton

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POST

Walsall Chronicle,  
Chronicle Editorial,  
51-53 Queen Street  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

### EMAIL

walsall.chron@  
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

## Time to rhyme for a memory of Frank

AS we are all blatantly aware it would have been the fantastic Frank Sinatra's 100th birthday recently, December 12. He had to be one of my most favourite singers of all time and will never be forgotten.

When Frank died on May 14, 1998, a huge void was left in the music world.

Soon after Frank passed away Barbara and Nancy opened up a guestbook inviting millions of his fans to pay tribute. I decided to send a poem incorporating his song titles and I was 'over the moon' when it was accepted:

Ode Blue Eyes  
Frank Sinatra eyes of blue – I always get a kick out of you. From New York New York to Chicago, A

grand master of music as we all know.

Come rain or shine or in summer wind, You always had the world on a string. I've got you under my skin night and day, They can't take that away from me if I have my way.

You're reputation (sometimes dodgy) but you gave so much pleasure, Nostalgic songs that will live forever.

So stranger in the night what now my love, Just keep on singing in heaven above.

And in the wee small hours of the morning, In your beautiful heavenly abode. Let's hear it, One for my baby and one more for the road.

J MASON  
Willenhall

## Variety show stars' failure

WHAT a load of rubbish the Royal Variety Performance was on ITV on Tuesday December 8. With the exception of 1Direction, Bev Knight and Sir Elton John the other artists were second class. Even Kylie Minogue wasn't at her best.

As for compere Jack Whitehall, why did he have to keep looking and referring to Prince Harry who I think smiled politely but was extremely embarrassed. Also, what was 'the play that goes wrong' all about. I thought 'Tiswas had finished years ago.

I will be going to watch my great granddaughter (aged five) in her school nativity play tomorrow, and I know that the performance there will be better by a long way than the rubbish shown on the Royal Variety Performance.

To conclude, did I hear Jack Whitehall giving three cheers to Prince Henry! Give me a school nativity any day.

B KELFORD  
Walsall

## Diplomatic nightmare

IT has been suggested that Donald Trump be excluded from the UK over his remarks about Muslims.

I remember the same thing about convicted rapist Mike Tyson. Instead he was given a second bite of the cherry, or was it his opponent's ear?

Given our 'special relationship' with the US, to exclude a potential president and head of state, would be a diplomatic nightmare; it will not happen.

What next, exclude 'peace' envoy Blair from a trouble spot.

R W WHITE  
West Bromwich

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# Children to get better help with problems

**HUNDREDS** of children in Walsall will get better access to mental health services after the borough was chosen as part of a new national pilot scheme, say health chiefs.

Walsall has been chosen for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and Schools Link Pilot Scheme.

A joint initiative from the Department of Education and NHS England, it aims to improve links between schools and health services and make it easier for children and young people to access specialist mental health services.

Ten schools across Walsall - including three primary schools, six secondary schools and a specialist school - will take part in the 12-month pilot.

Each school will have a named mental health lead whose role will be to work closely with local Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Staff at each school will also take part in training to improve their knowledge and understanding of mental health and wellbeing issues among children, the local NHS services that are available and how to refer children to these services.

Salma Ali, accountable officer at Walsall CCG, said: "I am delighted our application to be part of the pilot scheme has been successful. Improving mental health services for young people is one of our key priorities and one way in which we can do this is to improve our links with local schools."

David Haley, executive director for children's services at Walsall Council, added: "Being part of this pilot will help to ensure that more children, parents and teachers across Walsall know how to access the best support for young people with mental health concerns."

Anne Marie Carey, head of children's and adolescent mental health services at Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, added: "We look forward to working with schools across Walsall."

**Report by Simon Stone**

## Maternity shop's 21st



**Nurse Kathryn Halford with Friends chairman Beryl Davies**  
MANY an excited father to a new born baby has passed through the doors of the League of Friends' maternity shop in Manor Hospital over the last two decades.

The shop has recently marked its 21st birthday with a celebration where the volunteers praised the people who have helped contribute to its success. Beryl Davies, 79, who has been helping since the shop opened and is chair of the Friends, said: "We mainly see dads who tell us how exhausting the whole experience has been."

Kathryn Halford, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust director of nursing, said: "Congratulations on your 21st birthday - it's such an achievement."

## Hundreds back fight

A PETITION boasting more than 900 signatures calling for New Invention Library to be saved from closure has been handed in to council bosses.

The library, in Lichfield Road, is one of around half a dozen earmarked to close as part of plans by Walsall Council to save £25 million in its 2016/17 budget.

A paper version of the petition to save the library gathered 893 signatures, with 43 people offering their support online. The petition was handed in to council bosses at a cabinet meeting. Councillor Adam Hicken, who launched the petition, said: "I am absolutely delighted with the response we have had from residents."

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## Christmas fun is definitely on the cards for politicians



Wolverhampton North East MP Emma Reynolds' card by Karina Cheema, nine

FROM funny family portraits to Star Wars themed pictures and snowman drawings. It's Christmas time – and a chance for MPs to show off their personality with their own cards.

While party leaders tend to go for a picture of themselves on the front of their cards, others have gone for unusual designs and ideas. By far the most popular way for MPs to select their Christmas card pics is to run a card design contest – usually involving local schools. West Bromwich West MP Adrian Bailey launched a constituency-wide competition to design his card back in the summer.

It was won by 11-year-old Angelina Adams from Newtown Primary School in Tipton, who beat off competition from more than 300 other entries.

She was presented with a £20 book voucher, while her school received £100 from the Mr Bailey's own charity fund.

The card – which features a colourful painting of a reindeer – has been sent out to over 1,000 recipients. Dudley North MP Ian Austin invited local youngsters to design his card with Alanah Carroll of Straits Primary School, chosen as the winner.

Wolverhampton North East MP Emma Reynolds chose a winner and no fewer than five runners-up from dozens of entries to her contest. The top entry featured a pencil drawing of a Robin staring at a Big Ben, with Santa on his sleigh in the background. It was designed by nine-year-old Karina Cheema from Sty Paul's CofE Primary School.



Dudley North MP Ian Austin's card



A red-themed card from Jeremy Corbyn



Keith Vaz's Star Wars themed card, featuring Walsall MP David Winnick as Yoda



Chancellor George Osborne's offering



Gavin Williamson's card

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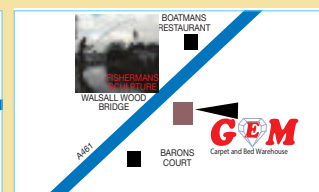
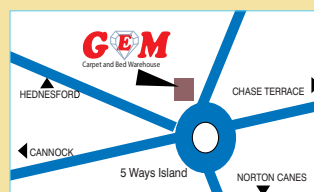
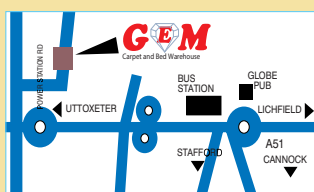
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A spectacular night-time view of the Christmas German Market



An amazing view of the festive-looking jib with the cityscape below



Forboding skies threaten inclement weather as the darkness starts to fall



The lit up crane shines in the night sky, with St Philip's Cathedral nearby

# Brum's best high lights

**THE tallest crane in the West Midlands is offering some spectacular night-time views across Birmingham's cityscape.**

The tower crane is currently sitting on top of the NatWest Tower, on Colmore Row. The building is being demolished to make way for a new 30-storey building that will be the tallest office block outside of London.

In the meantime the 330 ft tall crane, supplied to the project by Radius NPT, has an unparalleled view across Birmingham and to the countryside beyond.

The crane itself is now part of the cityscape after undergoing a festive makeover.

More than 9,000 flashing lights have been installed along the 118ft long front jib and 50ft of the crane. The crane was erected over three days and two nights in September, to aid with the demolition of the redundant office building and make way for Rockspring and Sterling's £60m office tower at 103, Colmore Row.

Three highly-skilled aerial technicians from Northampton-based Radius spent six-and-a-half hours installing more than 800ft of LED lights, weighing more than 50kg, along the jib and counter-jib. At 346 ft high, with the apex at

807ft above sea level, 103 Colmore Row will be the tallest office building under construction in the UK outside London.

In addition to 211,000 sq ft of office space over 19 floors, the landmark development will include a 8,000 sq ft restaurant with a 3,250 sq ft 'lambert' space at the top of the building.

Eric Linden, European director at Rockspring, said: "We are planning to illuminate the lantern space at the top of the new building. The Christmas lights are a taste of what this could be like - they can be seen from miles away."

The dazzling multi-coloured display will continue daily over Christmas and the New Year.



Dusk falls on the city with Centenary Square's big wheel all lit up and the library next to it

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There was lots of Christmas mail bound for overseas recipients which was being sorted at Castle Church Hall, Stafford back in December 1968



Carole Hurley, John Bunch and Kella Jaundrill got on their bikes in 1984 to take toys to young hospital patients



Dapper photographer gents from the Dudley Herald – Keir Dixon, Graham Gough, Ron Knowles and Geoff Wright were letting their hair down at a Christmas Party back in 1959



The Salvation Army in Walsall fought aliens in a 24-hour computer games marathon in aid of a Christmas fund



The Bedford Williams store was set to leave these premises in Victoria Street, Wolverhampton, in December, 1972

# Beginning to look a lot like Christmas

SO MANY different images have evoked Christmas down the years and there's usually been a photographer around to catch them.

From busy postal sorting offices to office parties, the rounds of pictures are much the same in whatever era they are taken.

Featured below, centre left, is one such typical example, published in the Express & Star in January 1975 after Twelfth Night, with children Brian Claw, right, and Michael Foyce, both of Low Hill Wolverhampton, at St Peter's Gardens taking down the nativity scene.

## MEMORY LANE

By Simon Stone

Next to this picture is a story of how several residents with health problems were not able to get out over the festive period because the lift had broken down in their Wednesfield tower block.

In the picture were Sarah Williams, Mabel Baker, Shirley Charters and son James. The accompanying story read: "Tempers at a Wolverhampton block of flats are sky-high after Christmas spent stranded in the clouds. Families with young children and tenants suffering heart and asthmatic conditions have

been separated from their families by up to 38 flights of stairs.

"They complain that the lifts at Bovey Court tin Wednesfield have been constantly breaking down. Sarah Williams lives right at the top of the 19th floor and after two major heart operations has a steel valve put in her heart. She has not been out since Christmas Eve and was unable to visit her family.

"Shirley Charters and her husband had to carry their 10 month old baby together with pram and shopping up 38 flights twice before Christmas. Mrs Mabel Baker, who suffers from asthma and lives on the eight floor, could not go out over the holiday." Let's hope their next Christmas was better...



Youngsters were saying goodbye to this classic nativity display in St Peter's Gardens, Wolverhampton, in 1975



Nineteen floors up, these families in Wednesfield, were left stranded in their flats over Christmas after the lifts broke in 1976



A 1979 nativity, with, from left, Jasbinder Kaur, Radha Kumari, Ravinda Kaur, and front, Marie Lloyd

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# Festive figures of fun in their s-elf portraits



Sarah in Pelsall found her elf had doodled on a photo

Bowled over – from Natalie Millard in Hill Top West Bromwich

IT'S the Christmas craze that's got everyone talking this year.

Elf on a shelf has seen Santa's little helpers turning up in some weird and wonderful places in homes across the Black Country.

Each day they check whether children are being naughty or nice before flying off each night to report back to Santa. With elves available for as little as £1 online, everyone is getting in on the act.

Children's book Elf On The Shelf tells the story of Father Christmas' 'scout elves', who are sent out to find out who should be on the naughty and nice lists. They fly home to the North Pole every night, and then return to the family they are spying on before they wake up to carry on keeping an eye on them.

The books are accompanied by a doll of one of the scout elves, and parents have been planting them in their houses to surprise their children.

Some people have decided to deco-



Rachel Edmunds from Great Bridge

rate their Christmas trees with the elves, while others have put them in crackers, and even placed one next to an advent calendar with chocolate



Liza Brookes from Willenhall's elf

round its face. Rachel Edmunds from Great Bridge had her elf make mini pancakes, and even get stuck in a water bottle.

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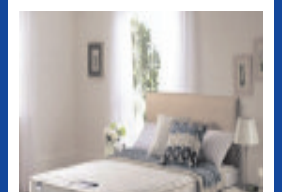
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## Threat to guard in raid

THREE men – one with a weapon – stormed into a shop in Perton before stealing bottles of Champagne.

Police were called to Sainsbury's, Anders Square at around 8.10pm on December 15 after a security guard challenged the men for acting suspiciously and was threatened by the man with the weapon. The men are all described as black and in their late teens/early 20s.

One had a slim to athletic build and was around 5ft 10ins, wearing a three-quarter length black jacket, black trousers and black and white trainers with a black hat. The second man had a medium to athletic build and wore black trousers and black and white trainers. The other was slim to athletic, approximately 5ft 11ins. Call police on 101.

## Indecent images 'to stitch up father'

A MAN found in possession of more than 1,400 indecent images of children told police they were not for him but part of a plan to 'stitch-up' his father, a court heard.

A laptop and memory card found at Philip Clarke's flat in Newhampton Road West, Whitmore Reans, contained a total of 1,303 indecent images and 151 indecent videos of children aged from three to 12.

Laura Hobson, prosecuting, said the youngest child pictured was around three-years-old and in at least one image the child was in "discernible pain and distress".

Clarke, aged 42, also shared 45 indecent images and four indecent videos with others using Yahoo and Skype.

He was handed an 18-month suspended sentence at Wolverhampton Crown Court last Monday, having previously admitted six counts of possessing and seven counts of distributing indecent images.

### Warrant

He must carry out 150 hours of unpaid work, attend a sex offenders' treatment programme and pay £500 in costs. He was also made subject to a sexual harm prevention order.

Police officers discovered the images after carrying out a warrant at Clarke's home in September last year. Most of the pictures were found on a memory card hidden under a mattress on his bed. Of the 1,454 images and videos, 121 were classified in the most serious category, Category A, covering penetrative sexual activity. Some of the material shared by Clarke also fell into Category A, the

### Report by Rob Cox

court heard. Miss Hobson said Clarke was interviewed by police in April this year and said the images were not for his satisfaction.

"He said the still and moving images were not to look at himself but that he was looking to stitch his father up by breaking into his home and putting them on his computer," explained Miss Hobson.

"He said he was an ex-burglar so he would have been able to get in to the property."

Clarke told police he had shared images between January and August last year to 'build rapport' with paedophiles online and obtain further indecent material.

Oliver Woodhouse, defending, said: "This is not a case where he was part of a wider paedophile ring where there has been exploitation for a wider commercial benefit. The majority of the 49 items distributed were in the lower categories."

Judge Michael Challinor, said: "It is one thing to view this material, albeit a perverted act, but it is much more serious to distribute it thereby potentially encouraging the vile abuse of children."

## Hundreds are struggling to pay their bills

HUNDREDS of Wolverhampton residents are struggling with debts of thousands of pounds and are battling day-by-day to pay their bills, new figures have revealed.

A helpline run by StepChange Debt Charity received 664 calls from people living in the city in the first six months of this year alone. On average, those seeking help had debts of £9,126 and fell £16 short of being able to afford their essential bills each month.

Previously known as the Consumer Credit Counselling Service, the charity has published a new report Navigating the New Normal,

with more than one in five Britons are currently facing some kind of financial difficulty and 2.6 million people are in what the charity considers to be 'severe' debt. Of those 2.6m, 73 per cent suffered a reduction in income in the last year, including losing their job.

Mike O'Connor, chief executive of StepChange, said: "Everyone faces ups and downs in life, but more than 11m people in Britain are now experiencing some financial difficulty and a quarter of those are in severe problem debt."

Anyone with debt problems is urged to call 0800 138 1111.

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# Christmas Eve

## BBC 1



**Lee Mack features in the Christmas special of Not Going Out, on at 10.45pm**

**6.00 Breakfast** Headlines and business news. **9.00 David Suchet: In the Footsteps of St Paul** Part two of two. How Paul brought Christianity to the Mediterranean world. (R) **10.00 On Angel Wings** (R) **10.30 FILM: The Santa Clause** (1994) Fantasy comedy, starring Tim Allen. ★★ **12.00 Bargain Hunt** Four teams test their antiques knowledge in Corby, Northamptonshire. (R) **1.00 BBC News at One; Weather 1.10 Midlands Today; Weather 1.20 Snow Chick: A Penguin's Tale** Following the first months in the life of an emperor penguin. (R) **2.20 FILM: A Christmas Carol** (2009) Animated fantasy based on Charles Dickens' novel, featuring Jim Carrey and Gary Oldman. ★★

## BBC 2



**Natalie Dormer stars in The Scandalous Lady W, on at 10.00pm**

**6.20 Homes Under the Hammer** A cottage in Cornwall and a house in south London. (R) **7.20 James Martin - Home Comforts at Christmas** (R) **8.05 Sign Zone: This Wild Life** (R) **8.35 Sign Zone: Great British Menu** (R) **9.05 FILM: Bedknobs and Broomsticks** (1971) Disney musical fantasy, starring Angela Lansbury. ★★ **11.00 The Hairy Bikers' Northern Exposure** (R) **12.00 Natural World** Gentoo penguins raising chicks in Port Lockroy in the Antarctic. (R) **1.00 FILM: Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit** (1993) Comedy sequel, starring Whoopi Goldberg. ★★ **2.45 Perry and Croft: Made in Britain** How the duo's comedies each encapsulated the end of an era. (R)

## ITV



**Keith Lemon presents Through the Christmas Keyhole, on at 9.45pm**

**6.00 CITV: Dino Dan**. (R) **6.15 Dino Dan** (R) **6.25 Sooty** (R) **6.40 Super 4** Fourchiesac tries to make a love potion for the Dark Baron. (R) **7.00 Good Morning Britain** News, current affairs and lifestyle features. **8.30 Lorraine** Entertainment and fashion news. **9.25 Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas** Stop-motion animated adventure based on the film Elf. (R) **10.25 Pick Me!** Game show featuring lively, loud and energetic players. (R) **11.25 FILM: Back to the Future Part II** (1989) Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Michael J. Fox. ★★ **1.30 ITV Lunchtime News; Weather. 1.45 FILM: Small Soldiers** (1998) Children's adventure, with Kirsten Dunst, Denis Leary and Gregory Smith. ★★

## Ch4



**Christmas displays, My Crazy Christmas Lights, on at 8.00pm**

**6.15 Small Animal Hospital** John Barrowman visits a centre for rescued rabbits. **7.00 The Big Bang Theory** (R) **7.20 The Big Bang Theory** (R) **7.40 The Snowman** (R) **8.05 Father Christmas** (R) **8.35 The Simpsons** (R) **9.10 FILM: Animals United** (2010) Animated comedy with the voices of James Corden and Stephen Fry. ★★ **10.55 FILM: Horton Hears a Who!** (2008) Animated comedy, featuring the voice of Jim Carrey. ★★ **12.30 FILM: Stuart Little** (1999) Comedy adventure, with the voice of Michael J. Fox. ★★ **2.10 Channel 4 News** Including sport and weather. **2.15 FILM: It's a Wonderful Life** (1946) Fantasy drama, starring James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore. (b/w) ★★

## Ch5



**Festive cheer in Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud, on at 7.00pm**

**6.00 Milkshake!** **9.30 The Real Face of Santa Claus** Documentary piecing together historical clues about St Nicholas, an early Christian bishop who lived in Turkey, while forensic experts build a reconstruction of his likeness. **10.30 FILM: Gone with the Wind** (1939) A plantation heiress has a tumultuous relationship with a roughish Southern gentleman during the American Civil War. Epic romantic drama, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable. ★★ **2.45 FILM: The Dam Busters** (1954) An engineer designs an ingenious bouncing bomb to destroy major dams in Germany's industrial heartland. Fact-based Second World War drama, with Michael Redgrave. (b/w) ★★

## Early View

**3.50 Finding Nemo** (2003) ★★

**5.20 Harry Hill in Professor Branestawm Returns**

**6.20 BBC News**

**6.30 Midlands Today; Weather**

**6.40 Celebrity Mastermind**

**7.10 Pointless Celebrities Christmas Special**

Featuring Jeffrey Holland and Su Pollard, Alison Hammond and Robin Windsor, and Colin Baker and Louise Jameson.

**8.00 Would I Lie to You? At Christmas** Rob Brydon presents a festive special of the comedy game, with Bill Bailey, Ruth Jones, Jo Brand and Kelly Holmes joining team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack.

**8.30 EastEnders** Stacey goes into labour during the nativity play. Ronnie is forced to choose a side between Vincent and Phil, and Sharon drops a bombshell that threatens to tear the Beales apart.

**9.05 Penny Kay: 20 Years of Funny** A celebration of the Bolton comedian's two decades in the business, going back to his early days before stardom, and hearing from friends and colleagues about what makes him tick.

**10.05 Williams and Friend** Sketch show, starring David Williams and Joanna Lumley.

**10.45 Not Going Out** On Christmas Eve, Lee and Lucy - who is three days overdue with their first baby - find themselves mistakenly caught up in a robbery at a local department store.

**11.30 BBC News; Weather.**

**11.45 Midnight Mass from St George's Cathedral, Southwark** Live service from south London, led by the Archbishop of Southwark, the Most Rev Peter Smith, with prayers to reflect the cathedral's international congregation.

**1.00 FILM: Serendipity** (2001)

★ ★ **2.25 Weather for the Week Ahead** **2.30 BBC News**

**3.15 The Snow Wolf Family and Me** (R)

**4.15 The Snow Wolf Family and Me** (R)

**5.15 Carols from King's To the Manor Born** (R)

**6.30 Dad's Army** Mainwaring finds himself bidding against Pike for an orange at a fundraising bazaar, but the private reveals a stubborn streak that costs the captain dear. (R)

**7.30 Christmas University Challenge** Graduates from Exeter University and Magdalen College, Oxford, compete, with wildlife presenter Nick Baker and documentary-maker Louis Theroux among the contestants.

**8.00 MasterChef: The Professionals** The three finalists have three hours to cook a starter, a main course and a dessert, before one of them is crowned Professional MasterChef Champion 2015. Last in the series.

**9.00 The Great History Quiz: The Tudors** Kirsty Young asks the questions in this quiz which sees two teams of historians, captained by Lucy Worsley and Dan Snow, demonstrate their knowledge on all aspects of Tudor life.

**10.00 The Scandalous Lady W** Fact-based period drama about an 18th-century noblewoman who found herself at the centre of a public scandal after eloping with her husband's best friend. Natalie Dormer stars. (R)

**11.30 Dial M for Murder** (1954) A tennis player's plan to arrange the death of his socialite wife goes wrong when she kills her would-be assassin. Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, with Ray Milland and Grace Kelly. ★★

**1.10 Simply Nigella: Christmas Special** **2.10 Christmas Shopping Fever 2015: John Lewis and the Retail Race** (R) **3.10 James Martin - Home Comforts at Christmas** (R)

**3.50 National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation** (1989) Comedy, starring Chevy Chase. ★★

**5.40 All Star Mr & Mrs** With Martine McCutcheon, Harry Redknapp and Gwyneth Strong. (R)

**6.45 ITV Evening News; Weather.**

**7.00 Emmerdale** Belle sees Zak and Joanie kissing and becomes determined to make her pay, while the warehouse robbery is on the news and Aaron's picture is in the paper.

**8.00 Coronation Street** Fizz tells Tyrone that Hope might not be allowed home for Christmas and Lapland might have to wait. Meanwhile, Tracy confides in Todd that she thinks Robert is planning to propose.

**8.30 The Abba Christmas Party** Paddy McGuinness presents as music and TV stars sing Abba hits, featuring performances by Susan Boyle, Alexandra Burke, Shayne Ward and Catherine Tyldesley and Scouting for Girls.

**9.45 Through the Christmas Keyhole** Keith Lemon has a festive rummage through the homes of three celebrities, challenging Stephen Mulhern, Claudia Winkleman and Jimmy Carr to guess their identities. Last in the series.

**10.45 ITV News** Including Regional News and ITV Weather. **Weather.**

**11.00 Christmas Carols on ITV** Aled Jones joins the congregation of St Elisabeth's Church in Reddish, Stockport, for their Christmas Eve carol service, with performances by Collabro and soul singer Toni Green.

**12.00 FILM: Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure** (1989) Time-travel comedy, starring Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter. ★★ **1.40 Murder, She Wrote** (R) **2.30 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA** (R) **3.15 ITV Nightscreen** Text-based information service. **5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show** (R)

**4.55 The Snowman** Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R)

**5.25 The Snowman and the Snowdog** Animated sequel to classic festive tale The Snowman. (R)

**6.00 Hollyoaks** When Locke hears about the explosion, he is suspicious of Cameron and threatens to go to the police. Elsewhere, the police search for Reenie and Lisa reveals her secret.

**7.00 Jamie's Night Before Christmas** Jamie Oliver presents last-minute tips to help people improve their festive dishes, having surveyed thousands of Brits to find out what they fear most about cooking at Christmas.

**8.00 My Crazy Christmas Lights** The phenomenon of competitive Christmas displays, where a passion for festive lights has seen neighbours trying to outdo each other for the most elaborate design.

**9.00 8 Out of 10: Cats Christmas Special** Jimmy Carr hosts another festive edition of the show, with some of the nation's top comedy stars joining team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson.

**10.00 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker** Alex Zane presents 50 festive internet clips that have proved popular around the world, including a turkey with a boob job and an inventive Christmas tree decoration-remover.

**11.00 Gogglebox** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

**12.00 The Inbetweeners** (R) **12.35 The Inbetweeners** (R) **1.05 The Inbetweeners** (R) **1.30 The Inbetweeners** (R) **2.00 Man Down** Christmas Special (R) **2.30 Man Down** (R) **2.55 Man Down** (R) **3.20 Embarrassing Bodies** (R) **4.25 Benchmark** **5.10 Kirstie's Handmade Treasures** (R) **5.30 Famous Fred** (R)

**5.15 5 News**

**5.20 Scrooge - A Christmas Carol** (1951) (b/w) Starring Alastair Sim. ★★

**7.00 Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud** Iain Lee presents Christmas-themed videos that have taken the internet by storm in a seasonal special showcasing hilarious online clips with a festive twist; 5 News Update

**7.55 Frank Sinatra & Gene Kelly: 'O! Blues Eyes Is Back** A TV special from 1973 in which Frank Sinatra performs a selection of classic songs and is joined for a couple of numbers by Anchors Aweigh co-star Gene Kelly.

**8.25 Happy Holidays with Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby** The veteran crooners' festive special from 1957, with songs including 'Away in a Manger', 'The Christmas Song', 'Santa Claus Is Coming to Town' and 'White Christmas'; 5 News Update

**8.55 The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show** Festive special from 1981, in which the duo perform vintage sketches and act as a backing group for Alvin Stardust. Featuring guest appearances by Ralph Richardson and Robert Hardy. (R)

**10.00 Christmas with the Double Acts** An hour of side-splitting fun with some of the greatest double acts to have graced the small screen, proving that when it comes to comedy, two are often better than one.

**11.00 Morecambe & Wise Live!** 1973 The duo's performance at the Ashcroft Theatre in Croydon's Fairfield Halls in October 1973, which was the only one of their stage shows captured on film. (R)

**12.30 FILM: Scrooge - A Christmas Carol** (1951) (b/w) ★★ **2.15 SuperCasino** **4.00 Michaela's Wild Challenge** (R) **4.25 Divine Designs** (R) **4.45 House Doctor** (R) **5.10 House Doctor** (R) **5.35 House Doctor** (R)

## Prime Time

## Late View



# Christmas Day

## BBC 1



**Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special 2015, on at 6.15pm**

**6.00 Breakfast** Headlines and business news. **9.00 Shrek the Halls (R)** 9.20 **Clangers** 9.35 **Danger Mouse: The Snowman Cometh** 10.00 **Christmas Day Service Live from Bath Abbey** A service led by the Rev Edward Mason and the Rev Claire Robson. **11.00 FILM: The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause (2006)** Christmas fantasy comedy sequel, starring Tim Allen. **12.25 FILM: Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted (2012)** Animated comedy, with the voices of Ben Stiller and Chris Rock. **1.15 BBC News; Weather.** **2.00 Top of the Pops Christmas** Featuring performances by Little Mix, Coldplay, Jess Glynne and Ellie Goulding.

## BBC 2



**Taking a personal journey, Darcey's Ballet Heroes, on at 8.50pm**

**6.00 FILM: The Road to El Dorado (2000)** Animated adventure, with the voices of Kenneth Branagh and Kevin Kline. **7.20 Galapagos - Islands of Change: Natural World (R)** 8.20 **FILM: Herbie Rides Again (1974)** Disney comedy sequel, starring Helen Hayes. **9.45 FILM: The Cat in the Hat (2003)** Comedy fantasy, starring Mike Myers. **11.00 Carols from King's (R)** 12.15 **Climbed Every Mountain - The Story Behind The Sound of Music** The true story behind the real Von Trapp family, with Sue Perkins. (R) 1.15 **The Good Life** Tom ponders the future. (R) 1.45 **FILM: Frankenweenie (2012)** Premiere. Animated fantasy, with the voice of Charlie Tahan. (b/w) **1.50 BBC News; Weather.**

## ITV



**Peter Wilkinson features, Cameraman to the Queen, on at 3.10pm**

**6.00 CITV: Dino Dan.** (R) **6.10 Dino Dan (R)** **6.25 Sooty (R)** **6.40 Sooty (R)** **6.50 Oddbods (R)** **7.00 Dino Dan (R)** **7.15 Horrid Henry (R)** **7.30 Horrid Henry (R)** **7.45 Christmas: Chowder** Chowder worries he will not get the gift that he wants. (R) **8.10 Almost Naked Animals (R)** **8.25 Weekend at Christmas** With Laura Fraser, James Morrison and Leona Lewis. **9.25 FILM: Santa Claus: The Movie (1985)** Family fantasy adventure, starring Dudley Moore. **11.30 FILM: Happy Feet (2006)** Animated adventure, with the voices of Elijah Wood and Robin Williams. **1.35 Text Santa: One More Time** Choice moments from the recent TV charity appeal. **2.45 ITV Lunchtime News; Weather.**

## Ch4



**Children share their views, Gogglesprogs, on at 8.00pm**

**6.45 Prep & Landing (R)** **7.05 Prep & Landing: Naughty v Nice (R)** **7.30 The Bear (R)** **8.00 FILM: A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures (2010)** **9.40 The Simpsons (R)** **10.10 The Simpsons (R)** **10.40 The Simpsons (R)** **11.15 Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas (R)** **11.40 Toy Story Toons 12.10 Father Christmas** Seasonal animation based on Raymond Briggs' book. (R) **12.40 The Snowman** Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) **1.15 The Snowman and the Snowdog** Animated sequel to classic festive tale The Snowman. (R) **1.45 FILM: The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)** Comedy, with Michael Caine and Steven Mackintosh alongside the puppet characters. **1.55**

## Ch5



**Sinatra 100: An All-Star Grammy Concert, on at 11.05pm**

**6.00 Milkshake! 9.50 Andre Rieu's Christmas Spectacular** A seasonal concert by the Dutch violinist and his Johann Strauss Orchestra, featuring performances of O Come All Ye Faithful, Silent Night, Jingle Bells and White Christmas. (R) **10.50 FILM: Scrooge (1970)** A miserly man is taught the error of his ways by a host of spectral visitors. Musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, starring Albert Finney and Alec Guinness. **11.05 FILM: Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (1954)** A cowboy decides to get married, prompting his six hellraising brothers to kidnap brides for themselves. Stanley Donen's musical Western, starring Howard Keel and Jane Powell. **11.55**

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

**3.00 The Queen's Christmas Broadcast 2015**

**3.10 Brave (2012)** Premiere. Animated fantasy, with the voice of Kelly Macdonald. **4.35 BBC News; Weather.**

**4.45 Stick Man**

**5.15 Doctor Who**

**6.15 Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special 2015** Six previous contestants compete for the Silver Star trophy.

**7.30 Call the Midwife** As Poplar readies itself for Christmas 1960, a visit from a BBC film crew promises to make it a festive holiday to remember. However, it's a difficult time for grieving mother Iris.

**8.45 EastEnders** Ian's hopes of a perfect Christmas fall apart when the Beales and Mitchells end up arguing. Stacey receives an unexpected visitor and Dean surprises Roxi with an engagement ring.

**9.45 Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special** The dotting mother's wish to have a safe and peaceful Christmas at home is frustrated at every turn. The first of two festive instalments, written by and starring Brendan O'Carroll.

**10.25 Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show** From the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, London, the host welcomes performers including Dara O Briain, Dame Edna Everage, Paul Zerdin, Ellie Goulding and Tom Jones to the stage.

**11.25 BBC News; Weather.**

**11.40 Love Came Down at Christmas** At St Alban's Church in Bristol, the Exultate Singers perform David Ogden's new choral setting of the Christina Rossetti poem, and actor Alex Jennings reads from the Gospel of John; National Lottery Update

**11.45 Comedy Bloopers**

**12.15 Not Going Out (R)** **1.00 FILM: Surviving Christmas (2004)** **2.25 Weather for the Week Ahead** **2.30 BBC News**

**3.05 Tim Rice - A Life in Song (R)**

**4.35 Romeo & Juliet (2013)** With Douglas Booth. **6.20 Sign Zone: The Queen's Christmas Broadcast 2015 (R)**

**6.30 World's Sneakiest Animals**

**7.30 Dad's Army** Pompous Captain Mainwaring proves he is a softie at heart by organising a Christmas treat for the struggling senior citizens of Walmington-on-Sea. (R)

**8.00 The Two Ronnies: Christmas Show** Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett in a special Christmas show of sketches, jokes and songs, with guests Peter Wyngarde and Patrick Troughton. Plus, music by Elaine Page. (R)

**8.50 Darcey's Ballet Heroes** Former ballet dancer turned-Strictly Come Dancing judge Darcey Bussell undertakes a very personal journey to meet the heroes and dancers who transformed male ballet.

**9.50 Q!** Stephen Fry conjures up some seasonal merriment with Jenny Eclair, Johnny Vegas and Bill Bailey supplementing the efforts of regular panellist Alan Davies.

**10.20 We're Doomed!: The Dad's Army Story** Comedy drama about how Jimmy Perry and David Croft overcame BBC management scepticism and focus groups to get the sitcom Dad's Army on air. Starring Paul Ritter and Richard Dormer. (R)

**11.20 Gambit (2012)** A put-upon art expert plans revenge on a millionaire by tricking him into buying a fake Monet painting. Comedy remake, starring Colin Firth, Cameron Diaz and Alan Rickman. **11.55**

**12.40 FILM: The Trouble with Harry (1955)** Hitchcock's black comedy, with Edmund Gwern, John Forsyth and Shirley MacLaine. **1.15**

**2.20 This Is BBC Two**

**3.00 The Queen Her Majesty's annual address.**

**3.10 Cameraman to the Queen** Royal cameraman Peter Wilkinson follows the queen over the course of one year.

**4.10 Countrywise Winter Wonderland** Exploring what makes this time of year special for Britain's countryside.

**5.00 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas** The broadcaster spreads festive cheer at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home in London.

**6.00 ITV Evening News; Weather.**

**6.15 You've Been Framed! With Bells On** Camcorder clips with a festive theme, including a pensioner throwing fireworks at carol singers, a Christmas fairy going up in flames, and a smartphone found inside a turkey.

**6.45 Emmerdale** Pollard finally leaves the house, and has an experience that forces him to confront his past, present and future. Coronation Street's Liz Dawn (Vera Duckworth) guest stars.

**7.45 Coronation Street** Robert is about to propose to Tracy, but first he asks her a question that leaves her reeling. Meanwhile, Sinead is thrilled when she gets an engagement ring of her own.

**8.45 Downton Abbey - The Finale** Mary endeavours to build bridges, but Edith's secret continues to pose a threat as Julian Fellowes bids farewell to the Crawleys with one last festive special.

**10.45 Our Cilla** A celebration of Cilla Black by the people who knew her best, including famous faces such as Ringo Starr, Cliff Richard, Christopher Biggins and Paul O'Grady.

**11.45 ITV News; Weather.**

**12.00 FILM: Dr No (1962)** **1.50 Murder, She Wrote (R)** **2.45 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA (R)** **3.25 ITV Nightscreen**

**3.25 Channel 4 News** Including sport and weather.

**3.35 Alternative Christmas Message** Channel 4's alternative to the Queen's Christmas Day broadcast.

**3.45 Scrooged (1988)** Christmas comedy, starring Bill Murray. **4.15**

**4.45 Home Alone 2: Lost in New York (1992)** Comedy sequel, starring Macaulay Culkin. **5.15**

**6.00 Gogglesprogs** The nation's children share their opinions on the best and worst of 2015's TV, from the cakes on The Great British Bake Off, to big news stories like the general election.

**9.00 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special** The host is joined by Catherine Tate's Nan, Keith Lemon, Lorraine Kelly, Emma Willis and Marvin Humes. Plus, music by Little Mix and One Direction. Last in the series.

**11.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Christmas Special** A number of familiar faces join host Jimmy Carr and team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson as they cast their eyes over some of the more memorable stories of 2015.

**12.05 Very British Problems at Christmas** A one-off return for the show. This time famous faces, including David Tennant, James Corden, Roshan Ranganathan, Catherine Tate and Danny Dyer, grumble about the festive season. (R) **1.05 FILM: Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)** A cocky teenager plays truant from school and spends the day dragging his friends into all manner of adventures in the big city. Comedy, starring Matthew Broderick and Mia Sara. **1.55**

**2.50 Friday Night Dinner** Adam finally brings a girl home for dinner. (R) **3.15 Gadget Man** Richard Ayoade takes on the worst of the British weather. (R) **3.40 Gadget Man** Richard Ayoade turns his attention to public transport. (R) **4.10 Benchmark** Game show, hosted by Paddy McGuinness. **4.55 Grand Designs Australia (R)** **5.50 How I Met Your Mother (R)**

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Week Two	Tuesday 26th January 2016
Week Three	Tuesday 2nd February 2016
Week Four	Tuesday 9th February 2016
Week Five	Tuesday 23rd February 2016
Week Six	Tuesday 1st March 2016

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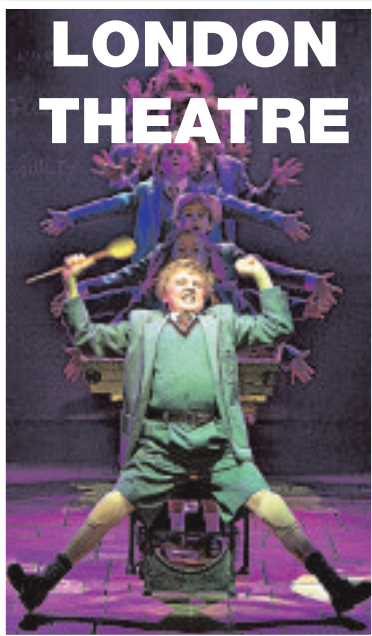
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Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing. For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. For the Saturday Night option see the evening performance.

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**Rail inclusive breaks – Two or three days**  
**Departures most weekends**

**Saturday Night Theatre from £169.<sup>95</sup>**  
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This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday morning returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening. Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade. Plus two nights stay at a four-star London hotel of your choice (hotel supplements may apply). Includes a top priced ticket for a Friday evening performance.

*\*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.*

*Single rooms subject to availability – supplement applies.*

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)

For a theatre brochure call the Promotions team on (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm), or go to [expressandstar.com/starextratravel](http://expressandstar.com/starextratravel)

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

# Boxing Day

## BBC 1



**David Jason stars, Still Open All Hours, on at 8.00pm**

**6.00 Breakfast** A round-up of national and international news, plus sports reports, weather forecasts and arts and entertainment features. Including NewsWatch at 7.45. **10.00 Christmas Saturday Kitchen** With Christopher Biggins, Eric Chivot, Pascal Aussignac and Nadiya Hussain. **11.30 James Martin – Home Comforts at Christmas** Transforming leftovers into simple dishes. (R) **12.15 BBC News**; Weather. **12.25 Football Focus** Dan Walker reviews the week's action. **1.00 Comic Relief 2015: Thanks a Billion!** Lenny Henry revisits comedy highlights from this year's charity event. **2.00 Wallace & Gromit: A Grand Day Out** (R) **2.25 A Grand Night In: The Story of Aardman**

## BBC 2



**Russell Howard stars, A Gert Lush Christmas, on at 9.00pm**

**6.00 Race to Super Bowl 50** Action from the week 15 fixtures. (R) **6.50 Flog It!** Making a profit at auction. **7.35 FILM: Tom Thumb (1958)** A miniature boy foils the schemes of a pair of crooks and helps a kind musician find true love. Children's musical fantasy, starring Russ Tamblin, Terry-Thomas and Peter Sellers. **★ ★ ★ 9.05 FILM: Hotel for Dogs (2009)** Family comedy, starring Emma Roberts. **★ ★ ★ 10.35 Ten Pieces II** The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and guests perform recitals of 10 classical works. **11.35 FILM: G-Force (2009)** Children's adventure, starring Bill Nighy. **★ ★ 1.00 Attenborough's Big Birds: Natural World** (R) **2.00 Attenborough's Paradise Birds** (R)

## ITV



**Holly Willoughby presents, Surprise Surprise on at 7.00pm**

**6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge.** (R) **6.25 Pat & Stan** (R) **6.30 Pat & Stan** (R) **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures** (R) **6.50 Dino Dan** (R) **7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story** (R) **7.05 Oddbods** (R) **7.10 Sooty** (R) **7.25 Super 4** (R) **7.40 Mr Bean: The Animated Series** (R) **7.50 Mr Bean: The Animated Series** (R) **8.00 The Aquabats! Super Show!** (R) **8.30 Thunderbirds Are Go** **9.00 The Tom & Jerry Show** (R) **9.15 The Tom & Jerry Show** (R) **9.25 Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas** (R) **10.25 You've Been Framed!** (R) **10.55 FILM: Back to the Future Part III** (1990) **★ ★ ★ 1.05 ITV News and Weather** **1.20 FILM: Jurassic Park** (1993) Action adventure, starring Sam Neill. **★ ★ ★**

## Ch4



**George Clooney stars, Fantastic Mr Fox, on at 11.25am**

**6.15 FILM: Ramona and Beezus** (2010) Family comedy, starring Joey King. **★ ★ ★ 8.00 The Morning Line** Nick Luck and guests are at Kempton Park to preview today's races. **9.00 The Big Bang Theory** Leonard fails to get Sheldon into the Christmas mood. (R) **9.30 The Big Bang Theory** The gang reflects on how Sheldon has changed their lives. (R) **10.00 The Big Bang Theory** (R) **10.25 The Simpsons** (R) **10.55 The Simpsons** (R) **11.25 FILM: Fantastic Mr Fox** (2009) A fox gives up stealing chickens in favour of family life, but a new challenge is too tempting. Stop-motion animated adventure, with the voices of George Clooney and Meryl Streep. **★ ★ ★ 1.10 Channel 4 Racing**

## Ch5



**Festive cheer, Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud, on at 7.05pm**

**6.00 Milkshake! 9.10 The Saturday Show** Matt Barbet and Gaby Roslin present the topical show with three celebrity guests, who discuss the week's headlines, as well as viral videos and the latest TV and film releases. **11.10 The Dog Rescuers at Christmas with Alan Davies** Qi regular and comedian Alan Davies throws a party for some of the stars of the series, and award-winning RSPCA officer, Derek Hampson hands out presents to rescue dogs across England and Wales. (R) **12.10 The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe** Biopic exploring how the actress and sex symbol managed to hide her most intimate secrets from the press, even at the height of her fame. Starring Kelli Garner and Susan Sarandon.

**3.25 Puss in Boots** (2011) **★ ★ ★ The Croods** (2013) **★ ★ ★**

**6.10 Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas**

**6.40 BBC News**

**6.50 Midlands Today; Weather**

**7.00 Dickensian** New series. Period drama re-imagining the works of Charles Dickens as inter-connected tales, beginning as ruthless debt collector Jacob Marley makes himself an enemy.

**7.30 EastEnders** Kat tells Martin that Alfie is still in Spain – unaware he is not far behind her – and Dean is angry with Shirley after she ruins his plans for Christmas dinner.

**8.00 Still Open All Hours** Granville and Gastric try to get Madge into the festive spirit by organising a cosy drinks party, while a bargain Christmas tree causes problems.

**8.30 Dickensian** Christmas Day arrives and Inspector Bucket begins his investigation into Jacob Marley's murder, and at Satis House, Amelia Havisham's mysterious rescuer makes another appearance.

**9.00 And Then There Were None** New series. Ten strangers are stranded on a remote island, and learn there may be a killer in their midst. Period mystery, starring Anna Maxwell Martin. Continues tomorrow.

**10.00 BBC News; Weather.**

**10.20 The National Lottery Live** Ore Oduba with the all-important Lotto and Thunderball draws.

**10.30 Match of the Day** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the full programme of Premier League games, including Chelsea v Watford, Manchester City v Sunderland and Stoke City v Manchester United; National Lottery Update

**12.05 FILM: The Guardian** (2006) **★ ★ ★ 2.15 Weather for the Week Ahead** **2.20 BBC News**

**3.00 Bedtime Stories** (2008) Fantasy comedy, starring Adam Sandler. **★ ★ ★**

**4.30 Final Score** A round-up of this afternoon's football results.

**5.30 Don't Panic! The Dad's Army Story** (R)

**6.20 We're Doomed!: The Dad's Army Story** (R)

**7.20 Dad's Army** Frazer is unable to hide his delight when Captain Mainwaring's disreputable brother gaterashes a sherry party for local dignitaries. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe. (R)

**8.00 Top Gear: From A to Z** John Bishop narrates the first of two programmes celebrating the highlights of the Jeremy Clarkson, James May and Richard Hammond era, via an alphabetical list.

**9.00 A Gert Lush Christmas** Comedian Russell Howard's debut comedy drama. Dan Colman is about to introduce the woman of his dreams to his crazy but adorable family at Christmas, but it may not go to plan.

**10.00 Abz on the Christmas Farm** Abz Love and his girlfriend Vicky Fallon spend Christmas reflecting on the successes and failures of their year running a smallholder farm in Wales.

**10.30 Backchat End of Year Show 2015** Jack Whitehall and his father Michael review the past 12 months, picking apart some of the highs and lows of 2015 in an end-of-year special.

**11.15 Kinky Boots** (2005) A man inherits a struggling shoe factory and finds salvation in a drag artist's need for custom footwear. Comedy drama, starring Chiwetel Ejiofor and Joel Edgerton. **★ ★ ★**

**1.00 FILM: Marnie** (1964) **★ ★ ★ 3.05 Sign Zone: Imagine – The Ecstasy of Wilko Johnson** (R) **4.40 This Is BBC Two**

**3.40 Midsomer Murders** A man's apparent suicide shocks the village of Morton Fendle – but things take a sinister turn when Barnaby and Jones discover the victim was not alone when he died. (R)

**5.40 ITV News and Weather**

**6.00 The Nation's Favourite Disney Song**

**7.00 Surprise Surprise** Holly Willoughby delivers Christmas presents to members of the public, including an injured soldier preparing to row across the Atlantic and a young heart transplant survivor.

**8.00 Peter & Wendy** Lucy Rose, a 12-year-old girl with a serious heart condition, is admitted to St Ormond Street Hospital to await treatment. On the night before her operation, Lucy reads JM Barrie's tale of Peter Pan to her fellow patients, and as she eventually drifts off to sleep, her dreaming mind conjures up the magical world of Neverland.

**10.05 The Jonathan Ross Show Christmas Special** The host presents a Boxing Day special in which he dispenses with his no-holds-barred questions, and instead invites guests to take part in light-hearted games.

**11.10 ITV News** Including Regional News and ITV Weather.

**11.25 From Russia with Love** (1963) James Bond is assigned to steal a top-secret Soviet decoding machine – but the mission is a trap set by crime syndicate Spectre. Spy thriller, with Sean Connery and Robert Shaw. **★ ★ ★**

**1.25 Jackpot247** Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.00 Murder, She Wrote** Cabot Cove becomes the scene of deadly competition when an eccentric recluse dies, and Jessica is given the dubious honour of executing the woman's will. (R)

**3.30 Home Alone 3** (1997) Comedy sequel, starring Alex D Linz. **★ ★ ★**

**5.25 Channel 4 News** Including sport and weather.

**5.35 The Secret Life of Children at Christmas** The children are reunited to perform their own nativity play. (R)

**6.30 Britain's Favourite Children's Books with David Walliams** The comedy actor counts down through a list of the nation's most beloved children's books, while other celebrity fans read extracts from the selected tales.

**8.00 Inside Lego at Christmas** Cameras return to the Lego factory ahead of Christmas to discover how staff prepare for the festive season, which accounts for more than half of the firm's annual sales.

**9.00 The Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2015** Rob Brydon, Sue Perkins, David Mitchell, Claudia Winkleman, Greg Davies and Jo Brand reveal whether they have their fingers on the pulse of modern life in the annual quiz.

**11.05 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker** Alex Zane presents 50 festive internet clips that have proved popular around the world, including a turkey with a boob job and an inventive Christmas tree decoration-remover. (R)

**12.10 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special** The host is joined by Catherine Tate's Nan, Keith Lemon, Lorraine Kelly, Emma Willis and Marvin Humes. Plus, music by Little Mix and One Direction. Last in the series. (R) **2.05 Rude Tube** Alex Zane counts down the Top 50 online videos devoted to love and marriage. **3.00 Hollyoaks Omnibus** Ziggy and Celine find Ste sleeping outside after another binge and rush him to hospital, while Reenie receives a invitation to Derek's will reading. (R) **5.10 Location, Location, Location** Two families who were selling up to fund a business. (R)

**3.15 Diana** (2013) Premiere. Fact-based drama, starring Naomi Watts and Naveen Andrews. **★**

**5.05 One Chance** (2013) Premiere. Fact-based comedy drama, starring James Corden. **★ ★ ★**

**7.05 Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud** Iain Lee presents Christmas-themed videos that have taken the internet by storm in a seasonal special showcasing hilarious online clips with a festive twist. (R)

**8.05 Chas & Dave's Xmas Knees Up!** Festive entertainment from 1982, which sees the Cockney duo joined by celebrity guests Eric Clapton, Jimmy Cackett, Jim Davidson, Albert Lee and Lennie Peters. (R)

**9.00 Football League Special: Boxing Day** Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the packed Boxing Day fixture list, including Hull City v Burnley and Derby County v Fulham in the Championship.

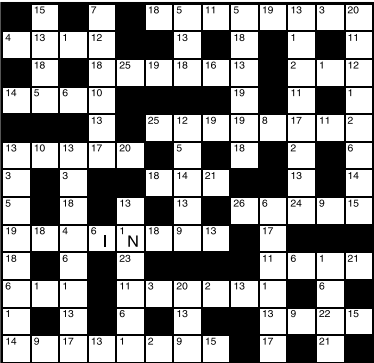
**10.30 Most Shocking Christmas Moments** A merry romp through the most inappropriate, outrageous and appallingly atrocious Christmas television turkeys of all time, featuring contributions from some of those involved.

**12.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Christmas Special** The world of debt collection during the festive period. (R) **1.25 SuperCasino** Live interactive gaming. **3.10 Kids' Hospital at Christmas: Revisited** Catching up with the six children who featured in the series. (R) **4.00 Chris Tarrant on the Polar Express** Chris embarks on a 2,000-mile railway trip from Moscow to Arctic Siberia. (R) **4.50 Make It Big** The raffle money goes missing. (R) **5.15 Make It Big** First episode of the reality show following 12 young entrepreneurs. (R) **5.45 Angels of Jarm** (R) **5.50 Angels of Jarm Bindi** is jealous of Jess's new coat. (R)



Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:  
X U A K H Z F Y P R C W D  
J T I B Q V E L N G O M S

1	N	14
2		15
3		16
4		17
5		18
6	I	19
7		20
8		21
9		22
10		23
11		24
12		25
13		26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

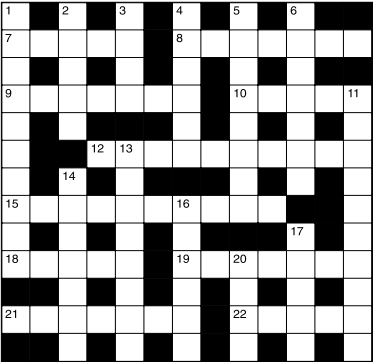
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- 7. Jovial fellow right for cutting (5)
- 8. Ashamed - got rid of a graduate (7)
- 9. Practised player gets well-used set of cards (3,4)
- 10. The chosen beginning of a power source (5)
- 12. Give way and tolerate a team (5,5)
- 15. It's unlikely that one politician can wear a gown (10)
- 18. There will be some on the staff, of course (5)
- 19. Dissipated sea-creature joins the air force (7)
- 21. Grimly holding the back end of the ship? (7)
- 22. It's more pleasant right by French resort (5)

Down

- 1. Pardon graduate getting up to answer (10)
- 2. Vehicles containing 500 pieces for game (5)
- 3. Gamble on article from the Greek alphabet (4)
- 4. Irritate mother animal going up to lair (6)
- 5. Game played at HQ dance (8)
- 6. I re-echo such a greeting (7)
- 11. Be comforted in that place twice (5,5)
- 13. A large number of old-fashioned pronouns also (8)
- 14. Picked out rashly, so to speak? (7)
- 16. Dresses youth leader in tapestry (6)
- 17. Black, sticky stuff suitable for playing games on (5)
- 20. An excellent punishment (4)



Quick Clues:

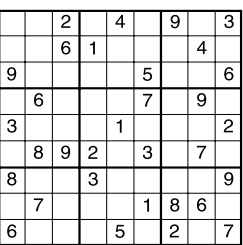
Across

- 7. Drive (5)
- 8. Egg white (7)
- 9. Food (7)
- 10. Drift (5)
- 12. Belligerent (10)
- 15. Generous (4-6)
- 18. Shade (5)
- 19. Nomad (7)
- 21. Yield (7)
- 22. Reject scornfully (5)

Down

- 1. Uneasiness (10)
- 2. Foam (5)
- 3. Too (4)
- 4. Transmit (4,2)
- 5. Impediment (8)
- 6. Sovereign (7)
- 11. Dissatisfaction (10)
- 13. Ignored (8)
- 14. Signification (7)
- 16. Figure (6)
- 17. Compass (5)
- 20. Pant (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

6	4	5	1	8	9	7	2	3
8	7	9	4	2	3	6	1	5
3	1	2	5	6	7	4	8	9
1	3	6	7	9	2	8	5	4
9	5	7	6	4	8	2	3	1
2	8	4	3	1	5	9	6	7
4	2	8	9	5	1	3	7	6
5	9	3	8	7	6	1	4	2
7	6	1	2	3	4	5	9	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Enable; 8 Matter; 10 Outside; 11 Avoid; 12 None; 13 Stole; 17 David; 18 Vote; 22 Least; 23 Outpost; 24 Strife; 25 Cutler. Down: 1 Resound; 2 Casting 3 Plain; 4 Capable; 5 Stood; 6 Bride; 9 Test pilot; 14 Mastiff; 15 Monocle; 16 Letters; 19 Class; 20 Harry; 21 Stout. QUICK - Across: 7 Return; 8 Quiver; 10 Diction; 11 Forge; 12 Club; 13 Grain; 17 Slide; 18 Gain; 22 Maxim; 23 Explain; 24 Clergy; 25 Joyous. Down: 1 Produce; 2 Stuck-up; 3 Krait; 4 Surfelt; 5 Avert; 6 Greed; 9 Unbridled; 14 Plumage; 15 Paragon; 16 Oneness; 19 Smack; 20 Expel; 21 Spool.

Thinking space

Quiz

- 1. Who was the Leader of the House of Commons from 1976-9?
- 2. In which country is the Athos peninsula?
- 3. Who was the companion of Don Quixote?
- 4. In which two months are the Dog-days?
- 5. To which crop is the Colorado Beetle a serious pest?
- 6. What is the gnu also known as?
- 7. Of what family is the Guinea-Pig a member?
- 8. How many gallons did a kilderkin once represent?
- 9. Which is the brightest of the planets?
- 10. In which country is Innsbruck?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Exodus; 2 The Tempest; 3 1965; 4

Klaus Barbie; 5 25; 6 June 6th;

7 Jane Austen; 8 Canada; 9 Czech;

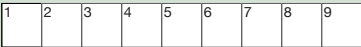
10 Painting.

Niner: SECTIONAL

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

456298 gives a dance,  
1534 gives a movie,  
4785699 gives a performance.



The Ultimate Disco  
NEW YEAR'S EVE  
Party  
DJ TRIBUTES TO  
TAKE THAT  
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RIHANNA  
MOTOWN  
KYLIE + MANY MORE...  
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Public Notice  
101 Upper Ettingshall Road, Bilston, W14 9QY. We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of £150,000. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place. EPC D  
Hardon Road Wolverhampton  
Well Presented Middle Terrace in a popular location. UPVC Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating Briefly Comprises: Reception Hall, Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen with Integrated White Goods, Guest WC, Three Bedrooms, En suite shower room to master, Family Bathroom, Front & Rear Gardens. £155,000  
Bailey Road Bilston  
This Semi Detached home which has the benefit of a brand new Kitchen and Bathroom briefly comprises, Porch, Hallway, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, First floor landing, Three bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage and rear garden. £125,000  
Public Notice  
253 Holyhead Road, Wednesbury WS10 7DU We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of £110,000. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place. EPC rating D  
Himley Close Bilston  
Modern Three Bedroom Detached Property offering spacious accommodation briefly comprises, Entrance Hallway, Guest Cloakroom, Lounge, Modern Kitchen/Diner, First Floor Landing, Three bedrooms, En-Suite to Main Bedroom, Modern Bathroom, Driveway and Detached Rear Garage, Front and Rear Gardens, Central Heating and Double Glazing. £175,000  
Sidcup Close Bilston  
This Modern Detached property which has been recently updated to a very good standard is located on the Sedgemore Park Estate. The property briefly comprises, Hall, Lounge, Dining room, Kitchen, Downstairs Cloakroom, Four Bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage and Rear Garden. £225,000  
Cresswell Crescent Walsall  
2 Bedroom end terraced house on a corner plot, entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, dining area, bathroom, driveway and rear garden, no upward chain, call 01922 241100 to view. £74,950  
Mount Pleasant Bilston  
This traditional mid terraced property with the benefit of upvc double glazing & gas central heating throughout, briefly comprises, two separate living area's, cellar, kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms and rear garden. £90,000  
Castleview Road Bilston  
Fantastic opportunity for a First time buyer or investor to purchase this Semi Detached residence. The property which is in need of refurbishment briefly comprises, Porch, Hallway, Lounge, Kitchen, Side Veranda, Three bedrooms, Bathroom, Separate WC and Rear Garden. The property comes with No Upward Chain. £90,000  
www.pauldubberley.co.uk  
Over 400 properties available to view online, on mobile or on tablet, most with fully voiced video walkthroughs.  
tv.pauldubberley.co.uk





Definitely worth a visit – Spices, Walsall Road, Bridgtown, Cannock



The spacious interior has comfortable seating



Manager Ali, left pictured with Head Chef Anwar at Spices

# New restaurant where menu variety was definitely the Spice of life for my family

IT'S always a shame when a long-standing pub shuts down – and these days it happens all too frequently.

But sometimes a successful, new venture fills the void. And that is exactly what Spices Restaurant has done in Bridgtown, Cannock.

Its former presence as a pub has not been completely forgotten, though. The Bridgtown Tavern – with an 'e' unlike the village it stands in – was a popular local, but after its unexpected closure around three years ago, Syed Ali stepped in to turn it into an Indian restaurant.

Ali already runs restaurants in Sedgley and Wednesbury but when the Cannock area was

suggested, he was not put off by the plethora of eateries already in the area.

"I know there were a lot of restaurants, but that means there are a lot of eaters," he said.

Cleverly, though, while identifying the need to cater for a growing clientele, he has steered clear of the main cluster of restaurants, thus avoiding where his main competition would be.

## Beams

Spices lies on a main road through the village, ideal for passing trade but far enough away from the town centre saturation.

Some of the pub's old features remain, though, including the centrepiece bar. It is because of this that the interior doesn't have that feel of a contemporary diner – and it's all the better for it.

Alterations have been made of course, but

## Mark Shipp tucks in

the exposed brickwork and beams give it a more homely feeling. Tables are set out to cater for parties of diners, or families, and it is this set up that Ali, as he prefers to be known, prides his operation on.

I dined with my family, and truth to be told, it was an evening that money couldn't buy. We had proper conversations, we could hear ourselves talk. There were other diners, but no-one too loud or boisterous – and, where else could you dine out to a background soundtrack that included Stevie Wonder, The Three Degrees and Simply Red? Not all my cup of tea, but certainly an eclectic mix.

Ali and his staff, there are 14 employed in all, took time out to chat to us and check everything was okay, while being fully aware

that other diners needed attention, too. What's more the food was enjoyed by all four of us. From a menu that featured a seemingly endless list of Spices exclusives and recommended dishes like the khunda, the choice was certainly extensive.

## Perfect

Ali spoke highly of his team of chefs, who like to add new lines on a regular basis and welcome comments from customers on favoured or requested dishes. They didn't let us down here.

Now I wouldn't say a fish dish is my favourite curry, but to quote the legendary philosopher Brian Clough "it's in the top one." I was in my element here as I was allowed to try two, the mach palak – pan-fried sea bass fillets in a medium sauce with spinach and potatoes,

complemented by lemon rice and naan bread, and the kanda wala machli, fish cooked in a lemon and coriander sauce. It's easy to say when being looked after for the purpose of a review that everything was OK. Often little things go wrong or not something is not quite right. It's human nature. However, this was a night when absolutely everything was perfect.

A more pleasant 'mein host' you could not wish to meet, in impressive surroundings, with a just-right atmosphere and terrific food.

It seems that Ali has it spot-on, and his regular diners – he caters for 70 but that can be extended – are proof of the quality served up.

For the record, the better half's makani bhuna and the children's tikka masala and chips were well received, too.

Spices is open from 5.30 to 11pm between Tuesday and Sunday. Call 01543 502767.



## Your Christmas Rubbish and Recycling arrangements 2015/16



### Changes to your rubbish bin collection service (grey bin)

Normal collection day	Your next collection will be
Friday 25 December 2015	Monday 28 December with 3 extra bags of rubbish
Monday 28 December 2015	Monday 4 January with 3 extra bags of rubbish
Friday 1 January 2016	Friday 8 January 2016 with 3 extra bags of rubbish
For operational reasons, extra bags of rubbish will be collected by a different crew.	

### Changes to your recycling bin collection service (green bin)

Normal collection day	Your next collection will be
Friday 25 December 2015	Monday 28 December 2015
Monday 28 December 2015	Monday 4 January 2016
Friday 1 January 2016	Friday 8 January 2016
For operational reasons no extra bags of recycling will be collected, please check our top 20 list to see what can go in your green recycling bin.	

### Your garden waste collection service (brown bin)

There will be no garden waste collections from Friday 20 November 2015 until week commencing Monday 4 April 2016. Please check your bin collection calendar for your first brown bin collection of the spring. Alternatively contact us on the details below.

### Your local tips – extra opening hours

Local tips (Household Waste Recycling Centres) will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. We are opening for two additional days, one at each site to help with increased demand over the holiday period.

### Poor weather conditions

If we can't carry out normal collections due to poor weather conditions we will keep you updated by local radio, our website, facebook and twitter. We will also leave a recorded message on our contact centre number 01922 653344.

Should you require further information:

Telephone: 01922 653344

Website: [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk)

Email [cleanandgreen@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:cleanandgreen@walsall.gov.uk)

@Cleangreentweet f Walsall bins and things

### Household Waste Recycling Centre Opening Times

Day	Fryers Rd	Merchants Way
Mon 21 Dec	✓	✓
Tue 22 Dec	✓	X
Wed 23 Dec	✓	X
Thu 24 Dec	X	✓
Fri 25 Dec	X	X
Sat 26 Dec	X	X
Sun 27 Dec	✓	✓
Mon 28 Dec	✓	✓
Tue 29 Dec	✓	✓
Wed 30 Dec	✓	✓
Thu 31 Dec	E	E
Fri 1 Jan	X	X
Sat 2 Jan	✓	✓
Sun 3 Jan	✓	✓

✓ Open  
X Closed  
E Open but early close at 4pm



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Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA Citigo range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 50.4 (5.6) to 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 70.6 (4.0) to 78.5 (3.6), Combined 62.8 (4.5) to 68.9 (4.1). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the ŠKODA Citigo range are 105 to 95g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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## Walsall Council, Planning and Building Control

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) act 1990 Development Management Procedure Order 2010 (as amended)

The below applications have been made to the Walsall Council. Applications can be viewed at First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Walsall or online [www.walsall.gov.uk/planning](http://www.walsall.gov.uk/planning). Representations can be made online, email: [planningservices@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:planningservices@walsall.gov.uk) or in writing to Head of Planning and Building Control, Civic Centre, Darvall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG. Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice. Please note: Your letter and personal details will form part of the planning file which is a public document and will be available for inspection at the Council Offices. The information may be released as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

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The application marked \* does not accord with the provisions of the development plan for the area.

## 10 Personals

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# ClassifiedAds



## Steve finds his focus in love of the game

FOR some time, Steve Staunton has been searching for focus.

Now, he thinks he's found it. Next autumn he will open a football academy, at Lichfield City FC, aimed at giving youngsters aged 16 to 18 another chance in the game.

Staunton sees it as an opportunity to give something back to the sport but it is impossible not to feel he will personally gain a renewed sense of purpose.

Since being sacked by Darlington, his second – and at this point last – managerial job, five-and-a-half years ago, the former Liverpool, Villa and Ireland defender has experienced life bouncing between scouting roles with no serious, long-term plan.

"I have been doing a bit of this and a bit of that," he says. "Nothing has really come up, it is getting harder and harder to get into football, whether it is as a manager or coach.

"This is on my terms.

"Does this give me focus? Absolutely. It's six years since I completed my pro licence and this keeps you ticking over.

"I would love to give these boys a chance to fall back in love with the game, enjoy yourself. I won't be easy on them but I will give them as near to as possible what a professional club will."

Staunton has never lost his passion since first arriving in England as a 17-year-old, after signing his first professional deal for Liverpool.

The Steve Staunton Football Academy is taking applications for September. Contact PTC Education on 01709 913600 or e-mail study@ptcgroup.co.uk

## Youngster is learning lots from Saido

ALBION academy striker Tahvon Campbell 'loves' playing alongside Saido Berahino in the under-21s.

The 18-year-old opened the scoring in a 3-0 win over Swansea under-21s recently, pouncing on a blocked Berahino shot before coolly tucking the ball in.

He then repaid the favour to last season's top scorer, winning a penalty in the 80th minute, which Berahino converted.

Campbell played as an out-and-out striker while Berahino dropped deeper into a number 10 role, and the youngster enjoyed linking up with the senior player.

"He's got lots of experience," said Campbell. "I just love playing with him and learning from him. He helps me a lot."

The young forward has a frightening turn of pace, which he used to good effect on Monday.

He also linked up impressively on a couple of occasions with senior winger Callum McManaman. "It was a really nice to play with some

## Villa cast an eye over Spurs winger Andros

VILLA are facing a battle with Newcastle United in a bid to take Spurs winger Andros Townsend on loan in the January transfer window.

Villa, who travel to the north east to face the Toon on Saturday evening, are keen on the 24-year-old who has slipped down the White Hart Lane pecking order.

However, fellow strugglers Newcastle are also said to be interested in the Spurs man.

Townsend is thought to be keen on a January switch as he seeks to play his way back into the reckoning of England manager Roy Hodgson ahead of next summer's Euro 2016 finals in France.

The Spurs winger had become a fixture in Hodgson's England squad but has fallen out of favour under boss Mauricio Pochettino.

# Cricketers face new year challenge

STAFFORDSHIRE Wolves visually impaired cricket club are aiming to hit the ground running in 2016.

The club, founded in 2014, are preparing for their biggest season to date as they enter a National Development League that will see players involved in much more competitive action.

And they are looking to boost their squad with players, of varying degrees of sight loss, ahead of the big season.

The Wolves were founded on behalf of Wolverhampton CC, who pushed through an initiative to promote disability cricket in the county, and alongside Beacon Centre for the blind.

Player and club representative Andrew Causton

added: "We're keen to recruit and drum up interest.

"All players have some degree of sight loss but the core of us are cricket lovers.

"We train on alternate Sundays so there are lots of chances to get to know the group and become a team.

"We've worked hard for this chance to enter the BCEW Development League and next year will be big for us.

Incentive

"Beacon Centre sent us an email to start it up and it seemed a very good opportunity.

"It's an incentive to train and keep fit. But we want to be more competitive than last year."

Blind Cricket for England and Wales (BCEW)

is an organisation separate from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and hosts a development league that will see the Wolves play six games in the season, three home and three away, against Lancashire Lions, Gloucester Growlers and RNC Hereford Bulldogs.

They train at University of Wolverhampton campus on Wulfruna Street and are grateful to the Black Country Consortium for financial help with training costs.

In their introductory season last year, the side entered a development tournament in Leicester.

Anyone interested in playing or helping out should call coach Steve Lightfoot on 07789 265618.

# Pics remembered 'magnificent' Mick

**CLUB legend Mick Clayton was mourned by all at Rushall Olympic as one of the 'magnificent seven' was remembered.**

Clayton was one of the playing stars in a golden era for the Pics, during the 1960s, and then helped the club take strides off the pitch over the following decades.

Clayton, alongside Brian Greenwood, Trevor Westwood, Graham Wiggins, Ray Wiggins, Johnny Edwards and Brian Humphries, played their part in masterminding Rushall's return to the village in 1977, when they moved to their current Dales Lane home.

Long-time friend and fellow committee member, Edwin Venables, praised his influence on the football club.

"They were a gang of lads that had a kickabout and thought, 'we fancy our chances'," he said.

"They started using a local chippy as changing rooms but they became quite a prominent side.

"They spent hours mucking in when they moved into their own base, chopping trees down and building the clubhouse.

"We moved to the Aston University Sports Ground in 1975 but soon after they started working with local councillor Dick Arkell and got the club a return to the local area."

### Dominant

The dominant era of the 1960s saw Rushall claim a host of silverware including the Walsall Senior Cup, Sporting Star Cup, Lichfield Charity Cup, JW Edge Cup, Walsall Memorial Charity Cup and Wednesbury Senior Cup.

Clayton, described as a 'very fragile, slight winger' in his day by Venables, played a large part – becoming the club's third highest-ranked appearance holder, and second-top goalscorer in the process.

He racked up 535 appearances for the Pics, plundering 254 goals, while also clocking up 103 consecutive outings for Olympic between 1967 and 1970.

Venables hailed the spirit of the side in the 1960s, and how a 'family' bond with the Pics stands to this day.

"As they get older they begin to dedi-



The Pics of the 1960s celebrate with the Staffs County League Division One title they won for four successive years

cate time to family, but the love and passion remained to the end," he said.

"Mick was a good all-rounder.

"The players of that time were one big, strong, happy family.

"The funeral at Streety Crematorium was rammed full, there were probably 200 people there. He was also a member at Little Aston Golf Club. There were all sorts of

friends in there swapping notes and seeing old faces.

"Players of today don't have that bond.

"There are no characters.

"Whenever there's an event, we don't need to tell them, they turn up and support it no matter what."

As well as heroics on the field, Clayton was ready to muck in and as well as serving on the committee, he has also had a spell as secretary and even first team physio-

## There will never be another George Best

THIS year Northern Ireland mourned the 10th anniversary of their greatest player's death.

George Best, who died at just 59 on November 25 2005, was an undisputed great – not only of his chosen sport, but of any sport.

Yet while his story – one of limitless skill, the best and worst excesses of celebrity and an ultimately fatal addiction to alcohol, still entrances – Best somehow failed to shine on the international stage.

At Manchester United the honours flowed – two league titles, the club's first ever European Cup, a Ballon d'Or and a highlights reel to match the best in history – but it was a curiosity that Best managed only 37 appearances and nine goals for Northern Ireland. Fewer caps than Niall McGinn, fewer strikes than Iain Dowie.

He is, without question, one of the finest players never to grace a major tournament. But his successors in the green shirt, after a 30-year absence, will do just that next summer after qualifying for Euro 2016.

Complications relating to a liver transplant denied Best the chance to share in the celebrations.

But Gerry Armstrong, a former team-mate, long-time friend and one of Best's pall-bearers, has no doubt what that would have meant to him.

"I can't believe it's 10 years since that awful day but it's amazing that it comes as Northern Ireland have just qualified for the European Championship," Armstrong said. "I know how proud George would have been about that. I just know he is somewhere up there looking down on us and smiling."

## Gabby's days at Villa look numbered

GABBY AGBONLAHOR'S days at Villa could be numbered with the club open to offers for the 29-year-old forward in January.

The club captain hasn't scored for nine months and didn't feature in the squad for their defeat against Arsenal.

Agbonlahor has struggled to impress new manager Remi Garde and if the Frenchman receives the right offer, Villa's longest-serving player looks likely to be out of the door.

After coming through the youth ranks, Agbonlahor made his debut for Villa in 2006 at the age of 19.

He won three England caps in 2008 and 2009.

But the striker's goals have dried up recently. He's only scored 10 goals in the last two-and-a-half seasons.

He's picked up more yellow cards in that time and is yet to find the net during this campaign.

Agbonlahor has made more than 300 appearances for Villa.

## Garde gets backing from Villa bosses

REMI GARDE will be backed in the transfer market by Villa in a bid to save them from the drop.

The boss flew to America with chief executive Tom Fox to meet owner Randy Lerner this week with Villa eight points from safety.

They are rock bottom of the Premier League and are on a club-record run of 15 league games without a win.

Fox appointed Garde as Tim Sherwood's replacement in November and said Garde will get the funds next month if he needs them.

"It's up to Remi. If he decides he needs something he has the chairman's ear and his support, absolutely," he said. "The transfer window hasn't opened.

"Remi has only been here for five games."

# Edwards could feel Morgan's pain

STEVE MORGAN'S decision to sell Wolves earlier this year left a cloud of uncertainty among the fanbase.

But one lifelong gold and black devotee saw exactly where he was coming from.

Dean Edwards, 53, is one of the few people to have gone from player to the dugout to the boardroom.

But the former Wolves striker, who started his career at Shrewsbury Town and also played for Telford United, admits his recent experience in owning a club as part of a consortium was a chastening experience.

"I look at Wolves fans abusing Steve Morgan and I know he hasn't done everything right, but they should be careful what they wish for," said Edwards, who divides his time between his home city of Wolverhampton and Torquay and had spells managing Hedgesford and Willenhall before fronting a consortium that took over the Devon club.

"Exactly the same that happened to Steve happened to me.

"I was working 70, 80 hours a week and I was getting abuse from so-called fans so I got to a stage where I thought 'let them get on with it'.

"So I've got sympathy for Steve Morgan. I don't

### Football

want to upset Wolves fans because I'm one myself and I come from Bushbury where my sisters and my parents still live.

"I used to stand on the North Bank in the late 1960s and 70s and I remember standing outside the social club on Waterloo Road and getting Hughie Curran's autograph.

"But I believe the fans are making a big mistake if they have hounded him out.

"I've been to lots of clubs such as Albion, Stoke, QPR and Blues and the infrastructure is not a patch on Wolves.

### Financially

"Sadly the club is in the same division as it was 25 years ago and the game has moved on, particularly financially.

"I remember taking a Torquay team to Weymouth for a friendly and even they had analysts, and when Mansfield played Liverpool, Liverpool had two buses – one for the players and one for the analysts.



# Sport

Challenge ahead  
for cricketers  
Page 27

Tribute to Mick  
the magnificent  
Page 27



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## Rushall rout Stafford with glut of goals

**Rushall 11 Stafford Town 0**  
RUSHALL OLYMPIC recorded a comprehensive 11-0 victory over an under-strength Stafford Town side depleted with injury to advance in the Walsall Senior Cup.

Alex Reid fired in the first from near the penalty spot on 13 minutes after the Pies had already forced a couple of saves from Richard Store.

Malachi Lavelle-Moore – making his full debut – doubled the lead when he cut on to his left foot and fired powerfully past Store on 21 minutes.

Two minutes later, Andre Brown – signed on loan from Crewe earlier this week – glanced in Jake Heath's corner before Zak Martin's mazy run saw him beat three men and dart into the box in the 27th minute to slot past Store.

Brown grabbed his second from another Heath assist as he curled the ball into the top corner from the angle of the penalty area on 29 minutes.

Less than a minute later, it was 6-0 as Reid sneaked in at the back post.

Brown took just 14 minutes to complete his hat-trick as he was played through by Heath and the striker lobbed Store from 20 yards to give Rushall a 7-0 lead at half-time.

Kris Taylor got among the goals eight minutes into the second half. Brown poked home his fourth on the hour-mark and added his fifth four minutes later.

The rout was complete two minutes before the final whistle as Luke Benbow played in Martin to finish into the far corner and make it 11-0 to the Pies.

Rushall Olympic: Coleman, Dudley, Martin, Tolley, Duggan, Christophorou (Wilkinson 46), Heath, Taylor, Lavelle-Moore (Benbow 57), Brown, Reid  
Stafford Town: Store, Dodd, Vaughan, Brown, Winwood, Green, Dennis (Wood 75), Nowell, Jones, Baxter, McMahon

## Sidelined Afobe has shown boss Kenny he is a pro

BENCHED Wolves star Benik Afobe has been praised for his professionalism by boss Kenny Jackett – who revealed no club has made an inquiry to buy the striker in the January transfer window.

Afobe has been on the bench for the last two matches with Adam Le Fondre preferred up front.

That has stoked speculation that the 22-year-old is set to leave Molineux in January.

But Jackett said no discussions had taken place over the former Arsenal man's future.

"There have been no offers or approaches from any clubs," he said. "Until that happens, nothing happens."

"Should it build up like last time (in the summer) we'll have to see."

"As it stands there's nobody making any inquiries, it's all quiet on that front."

"No we haven't had any conversations on Benik, other than on making sure he scores goals and plays well. In terms of anybody coming in for him, if and when it happens we'll discuss it then."

Premier League strugglers Norwich City lodged three bids for Afobe.

## Penalties send Saddlers to see Dean



Paul Downing gets the decisive penalty

**Walsall 0 Chesterfield 0 (5-3 pens)**

WALSALL needed penalties to book their place in the third round of the FA Cup and a date with destiny against Dean Smith's Brentford.

The Saddlers, who look set to appoint Sean O'Driscoll as manager in the coming days, overcame Chesterfield following a dismal game at the Banks's Stadium.

With chances few and far between, the score remained at 0-0 throughout 120 minutes with Chesterfield skipper Sam Morsy then missing his resultant spot-kick.

But Walsall scored all five of their penalties –

Football

with Romaine Sawyers, Jason Demetriou, George Evans, Milan Lalkovic and Paul Downing all finding the net to book their trip to Championship outfit Brentford.

Caretaker trio Jon Whitney, John Ward and Neil Cutler sprung a selection surprise in naming their starting XI for what was potentially their last game in charge.

Sam Mantom, who picked up an ankle injury in October's league clash with Chesterfield, was handed his first start since that 2-1 defeat.

# O'DRISCOLL IS THE NEW BOSS

**WALSALL have begun their life under a new manager following the appointment of Sean O'Driscoll.**

The former Bournemouth, Doncaster and Nottingham Forest boss was officially unveiled at the Banks's Stadium on Friday after signing an 18 month contract.

He replaces Dean Smith, who joined Brentford earlier this month along with his assistant Richard O'Kelly.

O'Driscoll previously worked with O'Kelly at Doncaster and is also close friends with Smith.

And now the Wolverhampton-born manager is keen to continue the good work started by the departed duo.

"The culture of the club was the main attraction more than anything else and what everybody at the football club has tried to build in the last few years," he said.

"I said to the chairman and the board of directors that in football it's very rare that you get to contribute towards developing a culture and philosophy."

### Entertained

"I've watched Walsall in the last two or three seasons and I've been entertained every time."

"There is an exciting project here and I'm relishing the opportunity to play my part in seeing that project through."

O'Driscoll's appointment has been met with widespread appreciation by fans, with more than 80 per cent backing the move in a poll on a newspaper website.

"We are delighted that Sean has agreed to join us as our new head coach," said club chairman Jeff Bonser.

"We believe he is the right man for the job and will maintain the club's philosophy of producing young players and playing attractive football," he added.

"He has already experienced success at this level with Bournemouth and Doncaster Rovers, and shares the values which lie at the foundation of Walsall Football Club."

"Sean ticks all the boxes in terms of the identity, blueprint and ethos that we work towards."



At Bank's Stadium, Sean O'Driscoll has been appointed new manager of Walsall

We believe in his ability to advance the football club, enhance our growing reputation as a progressive, forward-thinking organisation and we look forward to working closely with him, in what we hope will be an exciting new chapter at the club."

O'Driscoll has vowed not to make wholesale changes as inherits a side third in League One and which has become known for playing attacking, possession-based football under his predecessor Dean Smith.

"The attraction to this job is that I'm not fighting to change the culture and to install something here," he said.

"The principles are already in place. I am not going to change anything or suddenly make the team something they are not. I am just going to try and keep it going."

"The team is averaging two points a game. If it suddenly goes pear shaped, people are going to look at it and say what has he done differently?"

"The idea is to keep everything on an even keel and try and encourage the players to carry on with what they have been doing."

O'Driscoll has been out of work since October. But he revealed he was only going to return to the dugout if the right job was offered to him.

## Sporting get revenge to make it 10

**Wolves SC 2 AFC Hinckley 1**

WOLVES SC avenged their early season defeat against big spending AFC Hinckley and made it 10 Home wins in a row.

The first big chance of the game came as they seized on a poor pass from the back to stride clean through on goal and his low effort was superbly saved by Sam Arnold.

The opening goal arrived right on the stroke of half time as Westwood once again read another pass out from the defence he then released striker Jon Letford who rounded Arnold and fired into the net.

In the opening five minutes of the second half Luke Stevens made a super stop to keep Sporting ahead as the ball bounced kindly for the Hinckley forward and with Stevens to beat from a tight angle his low near post effort was superbly stopped.

On 70 minutes Hinckley came close again as a fizzing cross from the Hinckley right back flew just past the upright.

Sporting were happy to frustrate Hinckley and use their pace on the counter to cause them problems but Hinckley were given a life line with eight minutes to go as a rash tackle in the area by Shaquille Reid saw Hinckley awarded a penalty and despite Stevens diving the right way the penalty was hit with too much venom and nestled into the bottom corner.

Just one minute later though Sporting were awarded a penalty of their own as Reid released Sarmiento and his blistering run into the area saw him hauled down.

Up stepped top scorer Dan Westwood to coolly send Arnold the wrong way.

Hinckley pushed forward in search of an equaliser but the closest they came was a goal mouth scramble.

## Things are going right for Iorfa

DOMINIC IORFA has hailed Wolves' recent defensive improvements – and says he is enjoying his blossoming right-wing partnership with James Henry.

The 20-year-old recently signed a new contract which ties him to the club until 2019.

And Iorfa said confidence was high in the squad despite more points being dropped at home to Nottingham Forest on Friday, ahead of another televised game against Leeds at Molineux tonight.

"It was definitely two points dropped," he said of the game.

"We were in control of the game for such a long period."

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